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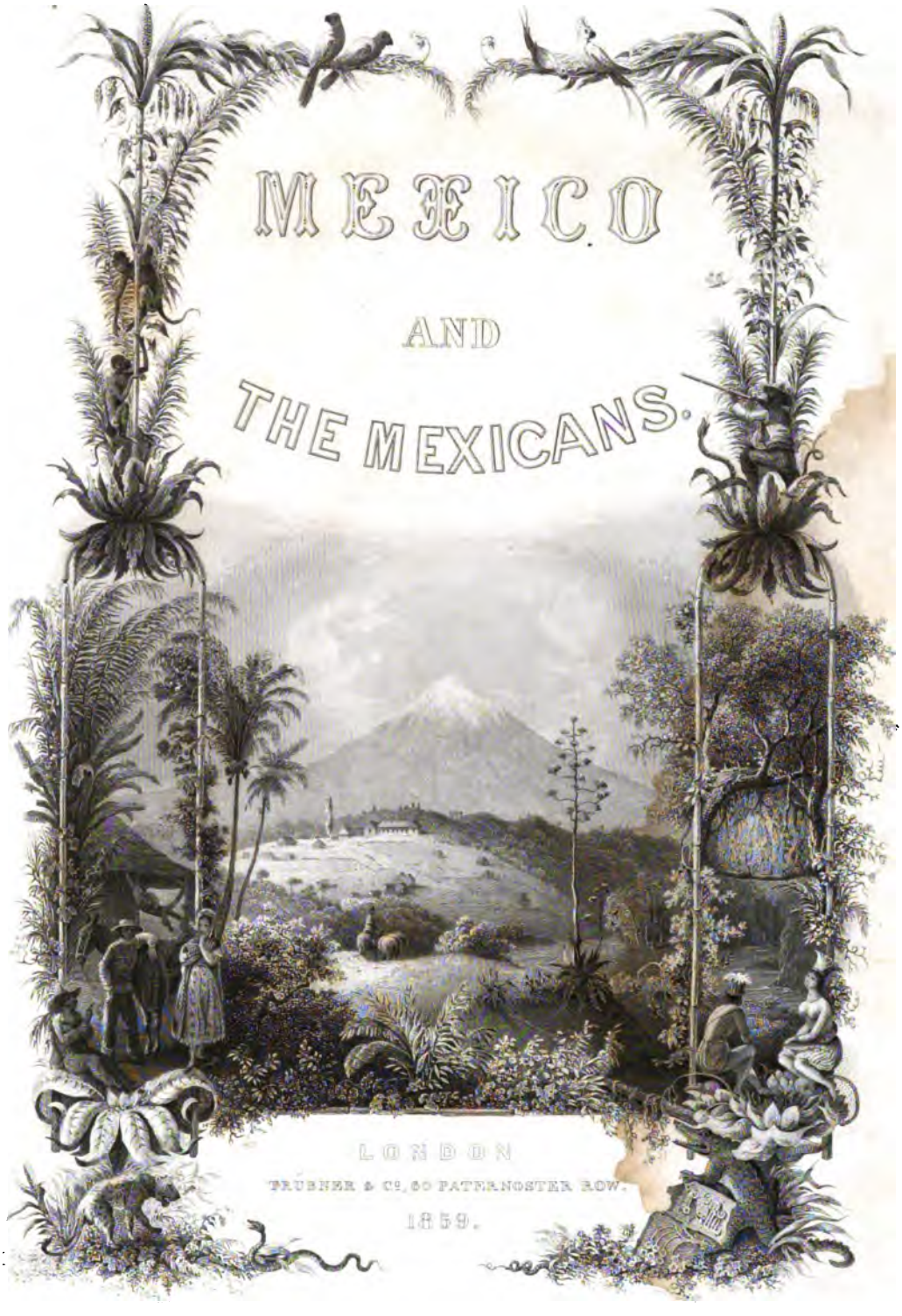
MEXICO

AND

THE MEXICANS.



LONDON

TRÜBNER & Co, 60 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1859.

Mexico.

LANDSCAPES AND POPULAR SKETCHES

BY

C. SARTORIUS.

EDITED BY DR. GASPEY.

WITH STEEL ENGRAVINGS BY DISTINGUISHED ARTISTS, FROM ORIGINAL SKETCHES

BY

MORITZ RUGENDAS.

LONDON:

TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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TO

DR. JUSTUS VON LIEBIG,

AS A MARK OF ESTEEM,

BY

C. SARTORIUS.

PREFACE.

In the following pages, the indulgent reader must expect neither a book of travels, conscientiously detailing every event from day to day, with the customary adjunct of the bill of fare, nor geographical-ethnological-statistical treatises, nor even a systematical enumeration of the natural history of Mexico: but **views of the country**, sometimes a mere outline taken at a distance, sometimes a more complete picture, drawn in the immediate vicinity, adorned with foliage and creeping lianas — **sketches taken from the life**, in the palace or in the cottage, on the far-extending savannah, or in the mine. During a long series of years I resided in a magnificent country, amidst the people and with them. As a member of the family, I beheld their domestic life, and may, without appearing indiscreet, call attention to many features, which necessarily must escape the scientific traveller, and the professional tourist.

Whoever is desirous of becoming thoroughly acquainted with Mexico, should study Humboldt's classical work: "A political Essay on New Spain." Despite the changes which fifty years have called forth, both in a political and social view, the basis of Humboldt's work is essentially the same, and Germany may be proud of possessing so scientific an architect. His work must always serve as a *point d'appui* for all that future travellers may indite respecting Mexico, whilst their productions can merely complete and extend what he has already done. These pages, therefore, may perhaps be regarded as the ornamental carving and fluting of the great master's strictly correct edifice.

My descriptions of the country and the social condition of the inhabitants are not carefully circled off, but are merely placed in groups or families. I am not skilled in systematising, and have therefore noted down only whatever struck me, and have given this or that in detail, leaving it to the intelligent reader to mark its connection with the whole. My object is to offer a succession of sketches; and there is no dearth of material.

With great interest I have devoted myself to the study of the history and monuments, the habits and mode of life of the Indians, and am enabled to present

much, wanting neither in freshness, nor in close and careful observation. The descriptions of popular features will also connect themselves with the views of particular localities: and here, too, there is no want of matter.

In my lectures, as a member of the Geographical Societies of Darmstadt and Frankfort, I have made allusion to much contained in the present work; and it will perhaps interest the esteemed audience, who were so indulgent towards my feeble endeavours, to find them here more extensively carried out, especially as they are illustrated by the excellent drawings of my friend Moritz Rugendas.

In conclusion I venture to remark, that I have read comparatively little of what has lately been published respecting Mexìeo; but much of that which I *have* read, is incorrect. It is far from my intention to criticise any of these works; should I, however, have shewn anything in a different light, I would fain request those who deem it necessary to support their views, to do so in a friendly spirit in the public journals, as I myself, in the interests of science, shall ever be ready to respond to whatever objections may be urged against mine.

Darmstadt.

C. Sartorius.

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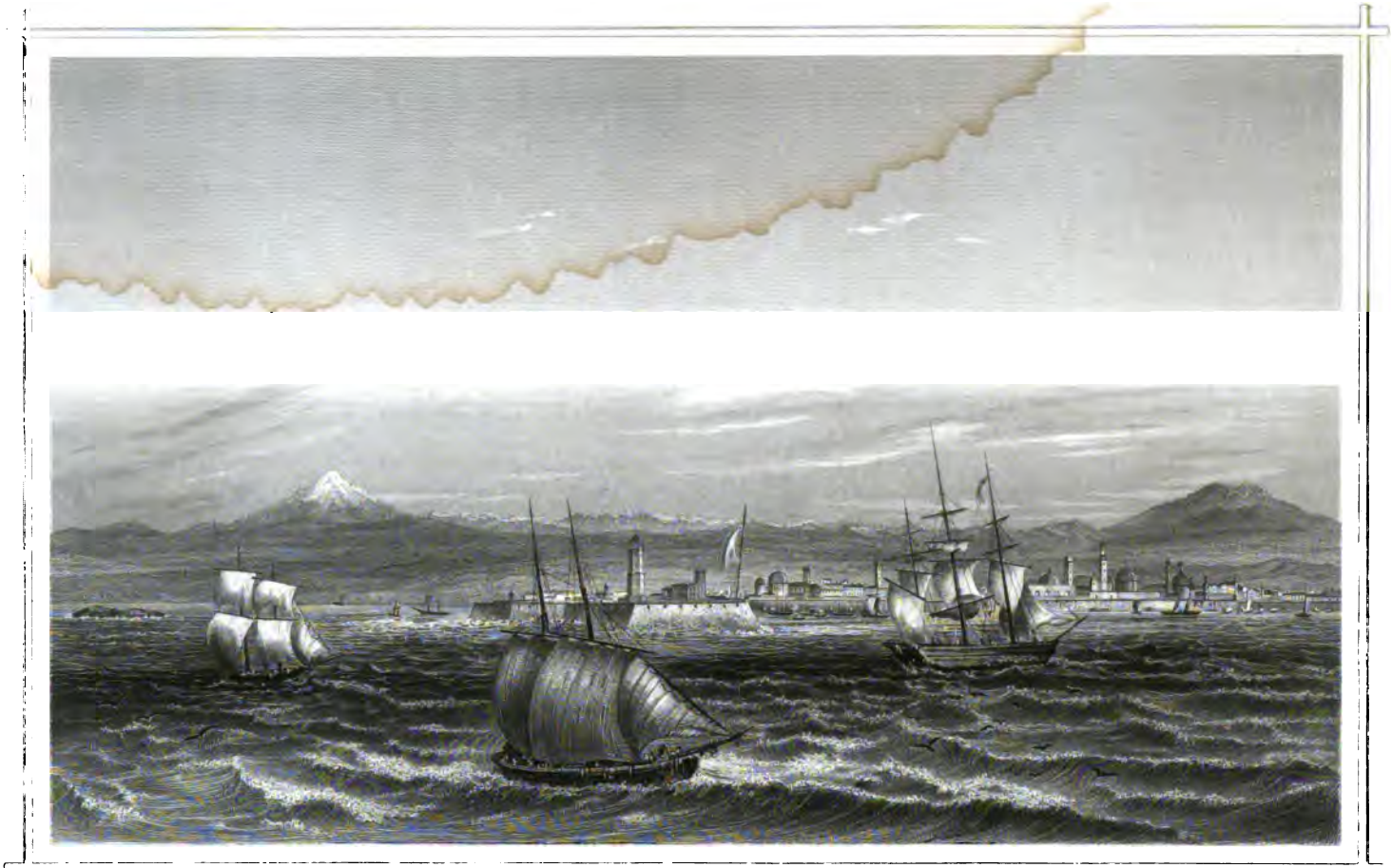

THE PORT OF VERACRUZ WITH THE CASTLE OF S. JUAN DE ULUA.

EL PUERTO DE VERACRUZ CON EL CASTILLO DE S. JUAN DE ULUA. | MEXICO | DER HAFEN VON VERACRUZ MIT DEM CASTELL S. JUAN DE ULUA.

I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

The uniform current of the trade-winds wafts the European traveller, desirous of visiting Mexico, first to the charming islands of the Antilles. If fortune favour him, he will perhaps obtain a glance of Montserrat and Antigua with their lovely villas, shaded by the cocoa-nut tree, or of the abrupt southern coast of St. Domingo, or of the picturesque outlines of the blue mountains of Jamaica; these visions, however, flit past him like the dreams of a tropical night, or like the Castles of the Fairy Morgana, whose quivering outline suddenly vanishes in the deep blue horizon. Until further progress has been made towards the west, it is impossible quietly to regard these appearances and to retain them.

On a fresh October morning we are roused by an unusual bustle on deck; the cry of "Land" is heard, and our destination is before us. To the left, on the level shore, is the port of Vera Cruz and its fort St. Juan de Ulua. Dark forests, gradually sloping upwards, enclose the sandy shore to the west; then follow several mountain-terraces, one commanding the other, till at length, towering above all, the magnificent cones and indented summits of the dark blue Andes seem to support the clear vault of heaven. Majestically rearing their heads over their fellows, are the snowy summits of the Peak of Orizava, glowing with the purple rays of the rising sun, and the wild jagged crater of Perote. From the latter the mountains branch off northwards to the sea, terminating in an abrupt rocky wall on the shores of the Gulf, whilst to the south, the Cordilleras extend in a huge semicircle in the distant horizon.

Regarded as a whole, the coast has the same features, whether we trace it to the south or north. Everywhere we find a narrow level tract of coast, not many miles in width, then a gradual ascent by gently inclining slopes to the spurs of the mountains, and finally to the highlands, which, almost uninterrupted, extend for many hundred miles from north to south, nearly parallel with the coast.

The ship has cast anchor between the fort and the town; a few minutes later we are on the quay. Everything is strange here, the language, dress and complexion of the inhabitants, and the town, with its Andalusian-Moorish trappings. Here we behold a group of negroes and mulattoes gesticulating in the most passionate manner,

there the copper-coloured Indian silently offering his fruit for sale; the clearer-skinned Mestins urges forward his horse, or trots on an ass after his well-laden mules, whilst the European or Creole dandy, puffing his cigar, examines the new-arrivals. On one side the Paris fashions, on the other the lightest possible clothing, consisting of a broad-brimmed straw-hat, coloured or white shirt and ample trowsers. The fair sex exhibits the same contrast: on one hand the greatest luxury, on the other half naked. What Northman can fail to be astonished at sight of the fat negress there, who seated comfortably at the door of her house, with a short clay-pipe in her mouth, caresses her perfectly naked offspring, clinging to and clambering about her like a very ape. Who would not cast a glance after that troop of Mestins girls, all mounted, with fluttering ribands in their straw-hats, as smoking their cigarettes, they jest with their brown admirer, who seated on his long-eared steed, thrums his *jarana*, and sings jocular songs.* The women and girls of the lower classes wear large four-cornered wrappers, much longer than broad, of striped cotton, which covers the head and is folded across the shoulders.

These cloths are worn throughout the whole country; they are becoming, and the brown beauties know well how to coquet with them. No gown or spenser covers the upper part of the body; nothing is worn save the fine chemise often embroidered and trimmed with lace, but scarcely sufficing to conceal the shape. From the hips to the feet however they wear a wide petticoat of bright calico or muslin, sometimes with a white under-petticoat, whilst the feet, innocent of stockings, are encased in light silk shoes. The Mexican women have a pretty foot; they are aware of it, and do not disfigure it with wooden shoes or similar elephantine pedestals, like the peasant-women of continental Europe. The dress of the wealthy Creole ladies is pretty, much the same as with Europeans, being regulated by the newest Paris fashions. For church-going, nevertheless, they adhere to the ancient Spanish black mantilla, falling from the head over the shoulders, and half way down the arms.

In all the originally Spanish colonies, the towns resemble those of the mother country. Straight streets with raised foot-pavements, massive stone houses with flat roofs, churches in the Italian architectural style of the seventeenth century, with low towers and high cupolas, covered for the most part with parti-coloured shining tiles, meet the eye. The interior of the houses is decidedly Moorish. You enter through an arched gateway into the first court, surrounded by a colonnade, which is repeated in the upper stories. The doors and windows of the apartments all open on this court. In some districts there is a pretty fountain in the centre, round which flowering plants are grouped in large vases. A second court is usually surrounded by the servants' offices, kitchen, stables etc. In Vera Cruz there are no fountains, the flat sandy soil rendering it impossible; good water for drinking is not even to.

* The *Jarana* is a little instrument with 4 or 5 strings, something like a guitar. Most of the women on the coast ride on horseback like the men, without wearing trowsers.

be had (that from a pond near the town is bad), except that which the tropical storms afford, and which is collected in large stone cisterns.

A strange impression is made by the numerous black vultures, seated in long rows on the buildings, or disputing in the streets with the lean dogs for the refuse of the kitchens. Their exterior is not precisely attractive, but these harmless animals, unwearied in performing the duty of scavengers, prevent the noxious effects that must otherwise arise from the exhalations of so much putrefying animal and vegetable matter, which the people are too idle to remove. From the Mississippi to the La Plata Stream these Zopilotes or Gallinazos are of incalculable benefit in the warm countries they frequent; they cannot fail to strike the European immediately. Among the first impressions made by Vera Cruz, may also be mentioned the shrubless downs, which environ the town and give it a very dull appearance from the land side. The Gulf Stream coming from Yucatan, proceeds along the whole coast, and conveys the sand towards the shore; the waves wash it on to the flat beach, where the sun quickly dries it, enabling the impetuous north-wind in winter to waft it up to the dreary hills, as we now see them. Nature's indefatigable laboratory must however not be misappreciated. In the rainy season the moistened sand receives so much consistency, that the floating seeds of many a plant can germinate in it. Those that appear first are usually purslain and commelinaceæ which by their fat leaf and rapid vegetation form a mould, and thus prepare the soil for other plants. These are followed by convolvuli and creeping syngenesists, also by opuntias, whose seed is scattered by the birds. The dense shade of the climbing plants renders the ground firm, the falling leaves form a thin layer of virgin mould, enabling shrubs to take root, and subsequently affording sufficient nourishment for trees.

On the Mexican shore of the Gulf it is not difficult to observe, that the land constantly receives accessions; the succession of downs and the increase of vegetation may be easily distinguished, accordingly as they recede from the sea. The incessant action of the Gulf Stream maintains the supply of sand, the mouths of the brooks and rivers are raised by it, and the overflowing waters convey the rich soil of the mountains to the lowlands. Although this only takes place occasionally, at the period of the heaviest equinoctial rains, it may nevertheless easily be comprehended why the plains are inexhaustibly fertile, and equally so, why the beds of the rivers gradually rise and produce a corresponding general rise in the lowlands. This creative agency of nature is carried on with infinite slowness, but still so that the result of the labour of three centuries can be distinctly proved; for, to adduce an example, ranges of hills now lie round Vera Cruz, where in the sixteenth century was a tolerably extensive plain.

Whoever is not detained on the coast by commercial interests, leaves it as soon as possible; for the scorching sun, as everywhere in the tropics calls forth treacherous miasma and relaxes the whole system. The fever season is properly speaking only in the summer months, when heat and moisture operate conjointly. Even at this period, the European paying a short visit to the coast has nothing to

fear, provided he diets himself, and keeps in the shade during the mid-day heat. Altogether indeed the Mexican coast is far less unhealthy than the more northerly situated plains of the Mississippi and Lower Arkansas. One has also the great advantage, that higher regions may be arrived at in a few hours, where the tropical atmosphere can be breathed with impunity.

II.

PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE COAST-REGION.

Two great roads lead from the coast (Vera Cruz) to the interior; the one passing through Jalapa and Perote, the other through Cordova and Orizava; there are further several bridle-roads, which are only accessible for horses or mules. The mail-coach that leaves thrice a week, and the sedans borne by mules may suit very well the convenience of travellers desirous of seeing no more of the country than may be viewed from the dusty road; we prefer, however, mounted on our mettlesome little Mexican horses, riding now to the left, now to the right, to make ourselves better acquainted with the physiognomy of the land. In the cool morning air we ride pleasantly along the shore, first westwards by the high-road, which we leave in half an hour, taking a northerly direction. The way is uniform, but the sand, moistened by the sea-water is firm. It is ebb-tide (ebb and flood are inconsiderable in the Gulf of Mexico; usually there is a difference of three feet only in the height of the water), tho coral-reefs to the north of the fort are partially visible; the waves ripple melodiously on the low sandy beach; flocks of sand-pipers follow them as often as they recede, to obtain the little mollusca. Grey pelicans hover heavily immediately above the surface, and sometimes plunge noisily into the flood, to convey a fish into their capacious pouch; the fish-hawk, high in air, espies the finny prey, which once seen, rarely escapes his talons. Crabs run about on the dry sand, looking like huge spiders, and conceal themselves in little hollows, if they do not first fall a sacrifice to the great king-fisher waiting for them on a piece of drift-wood.

After a ride of three hours we come to the river Antigua, which miserably struggling through layers of sand, reluctantly espouses the ocean. Here the above-mentioned appearance is very distinct; we see the bar *(barra)*, which the Gulf Stream deposits along the coast, necessarily sanding up the mouths of all the streams. Ascending the river, we are soon shaded by the densest vegetation. The family of the Leguminosæ predominates, in the form of trees, shrubs and lianas; we are rejoiced by the delicate appearance of the various species of mimosa, acacia and robinia, and

VIEW OF THE COAST ON THE ROAD FROM VERACRUZ TO JALAPA

VUE ON VUE DE LA COTE SUR LE CHEMIN DE VERACRUZ A JALAPA. [MEXICO.] PHYSIOGNOMIE DER KUSTENLANDSCHAFT AN DER STRASSE VON VERACRUZ UND JALAPA.

cannot cease admiring the clustering blossoms of the ingas and bauhinias. Cæsalpinias of slender growth, tamarind-trees with their beautiful feathery foliage, attract the botanist equally with the countless wild beans and peas, of which the *dolchos pruriens* (cowhage) flings thousands of garlands across the road, and covers the curious traveller, who stretches forth his hand to pluck the pod, with a cloud of sharp hairs, which penetrate the skin, and cause an itching. Beware of handling unknown plants! The elegant leaves of two kinds of jatropha, *rhus radicans*, and different specimens of wolf's milk, do not look as if they would burn the incautious hands that approached them; and yet this is often the case. On a subsequent occasion I shall give a more detailed account of the inimical plants, and shall for the present confine myself to a general view of the vegetable world.

On the banks of the river, the fig-tree and mammee-tree form a close wall with their mighty stems; the dark foliage is reflected in the tranquil water, giving it the semblance of a perfectly black stream. Whole rows of grave tantalus (black and white), dazzling white herons, and red spoon-bills are perched on the almost horizontal branches of the *ficus americana*, viewing themselves in the dark mirror, or an old alligator suns himself on a dry log projecting from the water, looking like a log too. At some little distance from the river, are the gigantic reeds or bamboos, their slender stems rising to a height of thirty or forty feet, with fine branches and leaves, whose curved summits wave like great ostrich-feathers in the wind. *Tarros* or *caña vaquera* the Mexicans call it, and use it as rafters and laths for their houses and farms. In the damp soil where they grow, are plants with enormous leaves, the banana, the wild plantain and large aroideæ, and wherever there is a standing pool, we find water-lilies and the blue-blossomed pontederia. Here and there amidst the entangled mass of creeping plants we observe already occasional palm-groups of *acrocomia aculeata*, large bignomiæ or trumpet-flowers, cecropiæ, suitaneæ and laurineæ. Further on myrtles are intermixed with the forest-plants, the yucca becomes more frequent, the thick straight stems of the heveas, which yield the elastic gum, and mighty bombac trees, covered with thorns, are very striking.

Let us pause for an instant at a hut and refresh ourselves with some fruit; for the sun is high, and the road hot and dusty. How slight a shelter suffices for these natives of the tropics! A slanting roof covered with palm-leaves rests on piles driven into the ground. Beams, rafters and laths are neither mortised nor nailed, but everything is fastened with bindweed and bast. The walls are bamboo stems bound together, whilst the doors and shutters are of similar materials. The bench, too, is of bamboo staves, also the bedstead, and a sort of repository for a few pots and plates. A fire burns day and night in the middle of the hut, where a pot with beans *(fryoles)* slowly simmers; the stones for crushing the maize stand on one side. The brown inhabitant, of African origin, gladly sells his bananas, pine-apples and oranges, and also brings a draught of water from the river, or perhaps a calabash, with palm-wine, which is admirable for quenching the thirst. The *acrocomia* is employed for this drink: it is cut down, and a little trough hewn in the middle of the

trunk with the axe. Here the sap collects, which is removed morning and evening. It quickly ferments, effervesces considerably, and has besides the flavour and attributes of new wine. Several weeks elapse before the sap is exhausted. A little field of maize near the hut, some dozen of banana stalks, a few fruit-trees, such as the lemon, spondia, aguacate *(laurus)*, hilama *(anona)* or sapote *(achras)*, constitute all the farming. Hard labour is not approved of by the dweller on the coast, and overbounteous nature seconds the innate inclination of the Jarocho. The river supplies him with fish and turtle, the forest with sufficient game; ready money is easily obtained by charcoal-burning, which is much in requisition at Vera Cruz. A few donkeys are included in the family, as without them there would be little comfort. The Jarocho (pronounced Tcharotcho, the general name for the natives of the east coast) would be ashamed to carry a *cantaro* of water on his back, although the river is scarcely fifty paces distant from his house; he ties his two large jars together, hangs them across Dapple's back, mounts behind, and steers for the stream. Arrived there, he rides so far in to the water, that the jars are filled of themselves, so that he has not even the trouble of dismounting. If fuel is wanting, the man rides out, to seek for a dry tree, already blown down by the wind, and which is precisely thick enough to be conveyed by his beast. By means of a strap he fastens the end of the wood to the horse's tail, which must now drag the wood, and of course carry his master besides. Arrived at the hut, the log is not cleft, but is passed in at the open door to the fire, and when the end is consumed it is gradually shoved in further, until at the expiration of some days, the house will hold it. This is the tropical *savoir faire.*

After a short rest, we journey on in excellent spirits, and soon reach a more open part of the river, where it is joined by a smaller stream coming from the south. A fine tropical picture lies before us, the tranquil sheet of water being surrounded by the most luxuriant vegetation; in the fore-ground are some huts beneath lofty trees, on the left bank of the river, in a forest of fruit-trees, the village of Antigua, whose ancient stone church is evidently one of the oldest in the country. The beautiful blue mountains of Misantla form the back-ground. Antigua was the first permanent settlement of Fernando Cortes; the mouth of the river was less choked up than at present, and the extremely fertile country offered every guarantee for the prosperity of the infant colony. Cortes had effected his first landing some leagues further to the north, and had erected the earliest dwellings at the mouth of a little river. The settlement received the appellation of Villa Rica de Veracruz. The situation was unfavourable for communicating with the interior, so that three years later, in 1521, the settlement was removed to where Antigua now stands, the original name being retained. It was not until the close of the sixteenth century, about seventy years later, that New Vera Cruz was founded by the Viceroy Count de Monterey, as the larger vessels were unable to cross the shallow bar at the mouth of the river. The new city, which was endowed by Philipp III. with civic

M. Rugendas del.t

C.M. Kurz. sculp.t

VEGETATION OF THE WESTCOAST, PALMWOOD & VOLCANO OF COLIMA.

PLANTAS DE LA COSTA OCCIDENTAL PALMAR & VOLCAN DE COLIMA. (MEXICO.) VEGETATION DER WESTKÜSTE, PALMENWALD & VULKAN VON COLIMA.

rights in 1615, soon eclipsed its predecessor *(la antigua Veracruz)*, which in course of time dwindled into a mere fishing-village.

In order to become acquainted with tropical vegetation in all its luxuriance, we must leave the main stream, and strike off in a south-westerly direction, following as nearly as may be the course of the smaller river, but without approaching too near. We find ourselves in an extensive well-wooded plain of deep fertile virgin-mould, whose impenetrable vegetation distinctly proves that soil and climate act in concert. Here we remark tall cæsalpinias and slender cedrelas; the American fig is seen of the most singular form; the shapeless stems occasionally shooting forth long horizontal branches, from which descend perpendicular shoots, and taking firm hold of the soil, soon serve as pillars for the support of the long branches, affording to the whole the appearance of a vast arbour. The large dark leaves of the tree itself, cast a deep shade, besides which the descending shoots are entwined with every imaginable variety of creeping-plants, by bignonia, paullinia, aristolochia, convolvulus etc., which often form the most brilliant festoons. On the thick branches are masses of large-bulbed orchideæ, and epidendræ (for example *E. cavendishii*) with beautiful umbellate blossoms, and on the thinner branches all kinds of tillandsiæ, especially the *tillandsia usnevides*, which floats in the breeze like a grey veil. The ground is covered with dense groups of long-leaved bromeliæ (*bromelia pita* for example) the tough fibres of whose leaves furnish the best thread for leather articles.

Occasional palms have already shewn themselves, but here we meet with complete forests of them, and moreover of the handsomest which nature can produce. On tall smooth stems, fron 60 to 90 feet high, the fan-shaped leaves, which, unlike the generality of palms, are attached vertically instead of horizontally, form large pointed arches. This peculiar disposition of the leaf gives it so elegant a curve, light and shade are so accurately defined by it, that a temple of magical effect is formed. Once I beheld a forest of this kind, from which the brushwood had been removed, representing the grandest cupola; palms of all sizes constituted the proud vaulting, the capitals were represented by the blossoms and fruit which regularly appeared under the stipules, the dark gloomy forest forming the walls, the light of the deep blue sky penetrating solely through the feathery palm-foliage. A feeling of indescribable awe and reverence was given birth to in me, and too distinctly I recognized and bowed before the might of the All-Wise.

This beautiful species of palm belongs to the family *cocos*, has much smaller fruit than the *cocos nucifera*, which is also met with along the whole coast, but is much handsomer than this. It is termed in this country the royal palm *(palma real)*, the same name, in Cuba, being given to the *oreodoxa regia*.

For several miles we are forced to struggle onwards, on narrow paths which are often slippery and wet, through a most wondrous vegetation, which has here the chief conditions of development: a powerful sun, and moisture. The greatest humidity is of no benefit to the plants, if the water is not supplied with carbon, to dissolve the alkalies and earths. But where all these conditions for the development

of a primeval forest in the tropics are fulfilled, man himself is a mere vegetable, for the sultry, moist atmosphere produces not only all the bad fevers prevalent in tropical regions, but calls into existence countless armies of tormenting mosquitoes, ticks and blood-sucking insects, which render life a complete torment. Only here and there is a little settlement met with in the bush, where a rising ground affords a freer circulation of air. The forests would appear intolerably lonesome, were they not animated by the shrill noise of the cicadæ, the chirping of crickets and grasshoppers, the chattering of parrots, the tapping of the woodpeckers on the dry trees, and the cry of the apes. Herds of cattle, too, are frequently seen in these forests, where they find abundance of rich pasture-grounds They are not wild, but are intentionally driven thither by their owners, especially in winter. Large butterflies flit beneath the thick foliage, settling occasionally on the blossoms of the beautiful creepers, which ascend to the highest tree-tops; whilst flocks of toucans and grossbeaks *(Rhamphastos)* seek for the ripening berries of the eugenias.

Although the tapir, the jaguar, and the *felis concolor* often frequent these forests, they are never met with by the passing traveller; occasionally, perhaps, a stag darts across the path, or an armadillo or aguti seeks a safer place of concealment. Even the snakes are found more towards the skirts of the forest, in the drier pasture-ground.

A few leagues more, and the plains with their palm-forests are in our rear, the country becomes undulated, the denser forest is seen in the valleys only; on the hills we find brushwood and tall grass. The climbing *combretum* covers the mimosa, with its long flame-coloured clusters; lime-trees appear among the acacias and ingas, and tree-like convolvuli with large white blossoms, reddish-brown within. —

The broad valley we have entered, opposite Antigua, conducts us by a gentle ascent to the main-road; a fine stone bridge across the stream assures us that we are approaching the habitations of our kind, and the different appearance of the country announces that we have entered another region.

III.

THE REGION OF THE SAVANNAHS OR PRAIRIES.

It is difficult to determine with any degree of precision where the forests of the tropics cease, and the prairies begin. This must in great measure depend on the nature of the soil; whether it consists of basaltic or volcanic remains, or of alluvial,

THE COUNTRY OF THE SABANAS ON THE EASTERN COAST.

PARAGE DE LAS SABANAS HACIA LA COSTA OCCIDENTAL. (MEXICO.) *REGION DER SAVANEN NACH DER WESTKÜSTE.*

far-extending plains. In some parts of the coast, the grass commences within view of the sea; but on a more careful examination, we perceive that the country consists of extensive slopes, rising almost imperceptibly from the shore. There is little water here, and the whole district is covered with basaltic rubble, partly in smaller fragments, partly in larger blocks, and the soil consists of decomposed basalt. In general the savannahs are met with at the elevation of 800 to 1000 feet above the sea, and extend as high as 2500 feet. These districts form almost invariably a sloping plain, rent by fearful chasms, stretching from east to west, where the mountain-streams foam in their deep beds. The reader must not picture to himself fair lovely meadows, but rather dreary wildernesses, overgrown with low thorny mimosas, frequently varied with larger groups of trees and small forests. There is, however, nothing grand in the character of the vegetation; as far as the eye can reach, we see the umbellated spreading mimosas, the calabash-tree *(crescentia alata)* laden with its vast fruit, some lime-trees, convolvulus-trees, euphorbias, and a few myrtles and terebinths. Dark, pillar-shaped cacteæ with their white tops peep forth, opuntias and mamillarias, bromelias and agaves start up from heaps of stones, and accord well with the grey brushwood of various kinds of croton and syngenesists. More to the west are groups of queerly-shaped cordelineæ; the base of the tree forms a cone of four, six, or more feet in diameter, diminishing as it rises higher to a diameter of one foot, having at its summit a large bunch of long, soft, riband-shaped leaves. In spring it is adorned with a succession of white blossoms, towering to a considerable height.

At a similar elevation we find on the borders of the chasms, the cycas with rigid leaves and stout stems, mostly from four to six feet in height. They are of both sexes, and the female plant bears a woody capsule with some hundreds of fruit of the size of a walnut, filled with a pure farina (sago). The stem and the root also contain sago. Here too we meet with the zamias.

In the summer months, from June to October, the tropical rains call forth a lively green, thousands of cows pasture in the rich juicy grass, and afford variety to the uniformity of the landscape. With the cessation of the rains, the prairies fade, the soil dries up, the trees lose their foliage, the herds seek the forests and chasms, and in the cloudless skies, the sun scorches up the unsheltered plains. In this season the prairies are often set on fire, partly to destroy the clouds of tormenting ticks and tarantulas, partly to call forth a new crop from beneath the ashes. At night it is a wondrous spectacle, especially in a hilly country, to behold the long fiery streaks hurrying on like an interminable torch-procession. During the day flocks of grey buzzards assemble on the outskirts of the conflagration, to feast on the countless grasshoppers driven off by the smoke; the fox is also on the look out, to see if nothing in his way is to be picked up.

Not many animals are met with in the prairie regions; the stag (in size and colour resembling that of Virginia, but with straighter antlers), the coyote, or half-wolf, the fox, and the rabbit are most frequent. Large flocks of wild turkeys roam

about the savannahs, the little partridge, too, is often seen, whilst in the chasms and woods the penelopes greet the rising sun with their hoarse cries. Amongst the grazing cattle, we constantly remark the stupid bobo (crotophaga), a species of jay; the cows and horses gladly tolerate him on their backs, where he disencumbers them of the tormenting insects. Neither towns nor villages are found in these extensive districts, but merely here and there the solitary farms of the cattle-proprietors, or of the herdsmen. They are a peculiar people, simple and hardy, well mounted and excellent riders; at the same time they may be depended on, are obliging and always in good humour. They are called Rancheros, and may be recognized at once by their leather garments, the hunting-knife at their side, invariably on horseback, with a lasso of leather hanging down from the saddle, and with long spurs on their capacious boots. Later I shall give some idea of the mode of life of the Ranchero, and of his festivals; at present he is only intended to afford the dull landscape some variety.

Nevertheless this region has a peculiar charm for men of an enquiring turn. Traces of extinct tribes are here met with, of a dense agricultural population, who had been extirpated before the Spaniards invaded the country. When the tall grass is burnt down, we can see that the whole country was formed into terraces with the assistance of masonry, everywhere provision had been made against the ravages of the tropical rains; they were carried out on every slope, descending even to the steepest spots, where they are often only a few feet in width. In the flat valleys are countless remains of dams and reservoirs, mostly of large stones and clay, many of solid masonry, naturally all rent by the floods at the lowest part, and filled with earth. On the dry flat ridges the remains of large cities are found, forming for miles regular roads. The stone foundations of the houses may be recognized, covered with heaps of rubbish and stones, large squares with symmetrically arranged stately edifices, the principal front adorned with temple pyramids, from 40 to 50 feet high; there are also traces of plaster and mortar, and of pavements. There where the union of two ravines with perpendicular rocky walls (and there are many such points) forms a projection protected on three sides, are castles of solid masonry, with ramparts and battlements; in the court-yards are extensive remains of palaces, temples and graves. All is now concealed by trees or tall grass; for many miles scarcely a hut is built, where formerly every foot of land was as diligently cultivated as the banks of the Nile or the Euphrates in Solomon's time. We know not whether a plague or hunger, or warlike tribes from the North, or some great convulsion of nature destroyed the numerous population, indeed we have not the slightest clue, which could enable us to decide to what people these relics of great industrial activity belong. Countless fragments of earthenware, arrow-heads of obsidian, with now and then portions of large statues hewn in hard porphyry, are the only remains of the plastic arts. Perhaps they were Toltec tribes, and were destroyed in their wars with the Aztecs. Only a few small Aztec villages are built in the savannah-region, none of which have preserved any ancient traditions. The village of Codasta

THE REGION OF OAKS BETWEEN JALAPA AND QUAUTEPEC LOOKING TOWARDS THE VOLCANO OF ORIZABA.

LA REGION DE LA ENCINA ENTRE JALAPA Y QUAUTEPEC CON LA VISTA HACIA [illegible] DE ORIZABA.

DIE REGION DER EICHEN ZWISCHEN JALAPA & QUAUTEPEC MIT DER ANSICHT DES VULKANS VON ORIZABA.

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alone, the ancient Cautastlan, with fine ruins of hewn stone, covered with sculpture, dates from an historical period; it was a royal residence, and was destroyed in the Aztec wars a century before the arrival of the Spaniards.

IV.

THE REGION OF THE EVERGREEN FORESTS.

From the platform of a "cué", or ancient Indian sepulchral mound, of which there are many in the plain, we will look round before the thick forest intervenes. To the east we overlook the light-green prairie, which is succeeded by the dark forests on the coasts. Beyond this the blue gulf is visible, and even the sails of the ships may be discerned; for in a straight line we are not so very far from the sea after all.

If we turn to the west we behold dark wooded mountains, above which, jagged and abrupt, rise the highlands, but to the north and south the mountains extend in beautiful undulations to the distant horizon.

The vegetable world is of course always determined by the nature of the soil; on a calcareous soil we find a different description of plants to those which are met with in trachyte or porphyry, for instance, in lime we have chiefly fan-palms and malvaceæ: but the conditions which the elevation above the sea produce, the isothermal line, would everywhere call forth analogous appearances. On the whole of the east coast, we find oak-forests at an elevation of 2500 feet. There is no gradual transition from bush to tree; the complete forest stands all at once before us. The species which grow in the lowest situations, are, on the east and west coast, distinguished by a hard leathery leaf, small acorns in bunches, and very tough wood; other specimens soon appear, and as they extend vertically about 5000 feet, we find the greatest variety in about 30 different species; they appear already in the mountains between Jalapa and Orizava. There are some species with leaves a foot long, acorns of 2 to 2½ inches in diameter, and others not larger than a pea.

Here we can breathe freely, no pestiferous vapours rise from the soil, no intermittent fevers rob the planter of his vigour, no enervating heats hem his activity. A soft mild atmosphere prevails here all the year round, rendered pleasant during the day by the sea-breeze, cooled at night by the refreshing mountain-air. Here the clouds driven by the trade-wind towards the highlands, most frequently discharge themselves; the country is never long without the fertilizing rain, and the plants are nightly refreshed with a heavy dew. Without artificial irrigation, here flourish

the sugar-cane, rice, tobacco, and the banana, without wearisome labour bounteous nature furnishes abundance of wholesome food within a small space. —

If we were surprised at the majestic forms assumed by the vegetation of the torrid zone in the plains on the coast, as displayed in the palms, bamboos and mimosas, we admire here the endless profusion of the tropical vegetation. All is life and organic activity. The oaks which seek a ferruginous, argillaceous soil, crown the heights with their far-extending branches; in the lowlands, however, there is a dense mixture of tall laurels, myrtles (for example, *myrtus pimenta*), otherwise chiefly eugenias, sapinths, terebinths, avalias, robinias, mimosas, ingas and cassias, large-leaved cecropias, or trumpet-trees, silvery crotons, dark figs, woolly linden-trees, elms with broad, leaf-like stems etc. Between them in rank luxuriousness are numerous species of reed-palms, *chamædorea*, one species of which is a kind of long creeper, the thin, reedlike bamboos, *panicum*, *sacharum*, and other tall grasses, the large-leaved scytamineas (musaceas and heliconias), agaves and tall-stemmed yuccas with splendid bunches of flowers, and polthos plants of every shape. Of the latter the most remarkable are the dracentias with enormous leaves, chiefly reticulate, which twine about the old stems of the trees high up into the boughs, or clothe the rocks with mighty festoons, sometimes with white blossoms, sometimes with scarlet fruit. It is hardly possible to form a conception of the countless lianas which twine about the brushwood, or ascend with bare stems even to the highest tree-tops, and are the roots of some parasite clusia, melastona, bromelia or eupativium. The vine, the clematis, the bignomia, the bramble, the sarsaparilla, also frequently appear like stout cables, putting forth shoots and leaves at the summit of the trees only.

Plants which in the north scarcely rise above the ground, here become trees, for instance the wolf's milk species, the thorn-apple *(datura)*, the nightshade, and sage. This is more especially characteristic of the climbing and arborescent ferns, which may be reckoned amongst nature's most graceful productions. Fancy only such groups of slender stems, twenty or thirty feet high, surmounted by a gigantic fan of fine pennated foliage, spread out like a vast parasol. How beautiful is the blue sky through the delicate texture! These ferns are always met with in damp situations, or on the borders of foaming torrents, surrounded by numerous specimens of the same genus, lycopodias etc., which twine about the stem, or take root in the charred leaf-stumps.

The active creative powers of nature call forth life wherever moisture can arrive. Even the naked sides of the rocks are clothed with lichens and mosses, and from every little crevice, where soil has been formed, proceed ferns, etc. Every tree becomes a colony of countless plants, from the roots, where fungi and orobanchese germinate, up the stem, where every little indentation in the bark, every crack shelters an orchis *(stelis, pleurotalis, maxillaria, oncidium, trycopilla, etc.)* or a cryptogam, to the forks, which usually bear large bromelias, containing a considerable supply of water for the dry season, in the duct-shaped, well-closed radical

leaves. The branches are thickly covered with succulent broad-leaved tillandsias, between which blossom stanhopias, lælias, and different species of epidendrum, or ripsalis hang down in thick clusters, and thus it goes on to the summit which is often crowned by the northern misletoe and the bright-blossomed tropical lovanthus. On the skirts of the forests their place is supplied by melastomes, and rexies, with numerous shrubs. Where smaller patches of meadow-ground appear, we find beautiful species of grasses and sedges and between them ground-orchis *(serapias, cipripedium, bletia etc.)*, amaryllideæ, *indigofera*, and many other leguminosæ and oxalideæ. Without culture, the forests produce many excellent kinds of fruit, as the sapote, ananas, and guayavas *(psidium)*; citrons and bitter oranges have spread throughout the forests to such an extent, that it is doubtful whether the latter, at least, may not be considered as a native product. In these favoured regions the fruits of the whole earth may be united by cultivation, and would be there if the Spanish race interested themselves more for the thing; as it is, no inconsiderable number are met with. The old world has sent thither its apples, pears, cherries, peaches, oranges, figs, grapes, and pomegranates; by their side flourish the East-Indian mangoes and papaws *(carica)*, the American ananas (six species), casimiroas, mammees, aguacates, spondias, the fruit of the passion-flower, excellent cactus-fruits, gourds of all kinds, and many others in such abundance, that even the natives are not acquainted with all the fruits produced in their country. An Indian village of this zone presents a truly delightful picture surrounded by heavily laden orange-trees, and banana stalks, by fruits of every imaginable shape and hue, and by the blossoming shrubs which invariably follow the steps of man. Among the latter we must reckon the graceful blumerias of every tint, the arborescent dahlias, the erythrimias, *datura grandiflora*, the lilac, and the rose, which surround every Indian hut.

On passing through these fertile districts, where there have long been large settlements, for instance in the vicinity of Cordova, Orizava, Huatusco, Jalapa, Papontla and other towns and large villages, we are surprised at the few oases of cultivated land in proportion to the large tracts of what may be well called wilderness. It is partly accounted for by the spare population, partly by the productiveness of the soil, which within a small space produces a mass of nutritious fruits. Who is unacquainted with the valuable and important banana,* and of the nourishing roots, such as: yam, manioc, arum, batate, arrow-root? The yield of maize is two hundred fold, of rice fifty to sixty fold; the coffee-plant flourishes here as in its native mountains, vanilla grows in the forest, colouring matter, spices and drugs are in part spontaneously brought forth by nature, and are in part easily obtained by cultivation; can we then wonder if the natives enjoy the banquet thus prepared for them, and deem it folly to care for the future. The animal creation would seem to set the example of thoughtlessness. At all events the nests of most birds are construc-

* In some parts of Mexico the banana, or plantain-tree can furnish sustenance for fifty men from ground on which wheat would not give more than would be requisite for the nourishment of two.

ted much less artistically, and with infinitely less care than in colder regions; and the widely extended family of the troupiale *(eassicus, icterus etc.)*, which come everywhere in flocks to the dwellings of man, leave the care of the nest and the rearing of the young to the thrushes and fly-catchers, so as to enjoy their lives in merry company.

It has been mentioned already, that the vertical extent of the oak-forests is upwards of 5000 feet,* and thus far extend also the evergreen forests. We find that the most luxurious vegetation exists at the height of 2500 to 4500 feet above the sea. At the elevation of 4000 feet are the tropical forms, such as palms, zamias, scytamineas, aroideas etc. Plants resembling those of the temperate zones begin to appear: liquid-amber and hornbeam *(carpinus)* are most frequent in the forest, and four species of magnolias appear in scattered groups. Near the streams the mighty stems of the plane-trees have a noble appearance, and are replaced higher up by willows and alders.

In places where there is no forest, succulent grasses, ranunculaceæ, and plantains appear, besides the tough-leaved syngenesists (tall thistles and bushes), durantas and hawthorn, the representatives of the heath-tribe, andromedas and arbutus. The herbaceous labiatæ are here most diffuse, and precisely these districts are fittest for the management of bees. The extreme limits of the banana and coffee-plant may be taken at 5000 feet, whilst ananas and mangoes no longer flourish at this elevation; European fruits, however, bear plentifully, also the chirimoyas and aguacates *(anona* and *persea)*.

Between four and six thousand feet above the sea, most of the original settlements of the natives are met with, along the whole mountain-range. In loftier situations the climate is no longer tropical, frequent rains cool the air, and in winter, rime and snow-storms are nothing unusual. Nevertheless this climate is exceedingly healthy, and uniform; the average temperature being from 13 to 14 degrees of Reaumur; the valleys and mountain slopes are adorned with perennial green, and the products of the frigid zones can be harvested the whole year round.

In the savannah region we passed over the gentle slopes of profound chasms, whose sides contain conglomerate and sandstone, in some of the more elevated spots, a firm grey limestone: in the forest region the mountains are much indented; narrow valleys, steep declivities, sometimes red clay on the surface, sometimes decomposed lava and ashes. Everywhere are indications of volcanic activity, craters fallen in, streams of lava, mountains uplifted and cast down. All the streams are torrents, forming countless waterfalls. A vapoury cloud is often observed rising from some obscure recess of the forest; it is sure to be a cascade, precipitating itself into some deep abyss. The country only here and there assumes the level appearance of pla-

* This is not to be understood literally; for I discovered a species of oak some hundred paces from the sea near Salinas, a few miles to the south of Vera Cruz, others at an elevation of ten thousand feet in the mountains of Orizava and Toluca.

H. Ehrenberg del.

Ch. Koppel sculpt.

REGION OF THE PINES.

REGION DE LOS PINOS. | MEXICO. | REGION DER NADELHÖLZER.

teaus, or of broader valleys; for the most part it has an Alpine character with a tropical and sub-tropical dress, smiling valleys, dark forest-grown mountains, everywhere moisture, an exuberant vegetable and animal kingdom.

V.

THE HIGHLANDS. REGION OF PINES.

The eastern side of the Andes presents us with a vast plain, resembling the sea; the principal mountain-range instead of jutting forth, gradually rises in the form of terraces, each of which is distinguished by the peculiar character of its vegetation. The whole of the country from the gulf of Vera Cruz to the highlands, is of undoubted volcanic formation; nowhere is there a trace of granite or gneiss, but on all sides we meet with conglomerate and tufa, lava, basalt and porphyry. Everywhere there are conical mountains with fallen craters, all open to the east, a proof of the fearful convulsions the country must have been subjected to. In many parts there is a crystalline-slaty stone, with a regular angle of incidence of about 60°, rising in a curve from below; at other points calcareous mountains appear between volcanic formations.

Quite apart, however, from the volcanic agency, it is perfectly evident that the whole country has been cast up from the profoundest depths by plutonic convulsions. The sides of the chasms, often rising perpendicularly from 1000 to 1500 feet, consist in many places of sandstone, mixed with rude blocks of basalt, in massive layers, separated horizontally by patches of rubble, sometimes three feet in thickness, firmly baked together with sand and iron-hydrate. The volcanic stream has open lofty conical flues, extending even as high as the snow-regions. At a considerable elevation above the sea, I have beheld petrefactions of sea-shells, in grey lime, amongst which I was struck by several large pectinites.

Future travellers will present us with geological sketches of the country; I have only alluded to the little I am able to judge of, in order to render the progressive elevation distinct, which here determines the change of climate. In countless spots we find ourselves in the most beautiful woods, in all the luxuriance of a semi-tropical vegetation; a steep mountain-path conducts us 2000 feet higher, and as though by magic we stand in a pine-forest, and hear the whistling of the wind as in the forests of the north. Elsewhere the change is more gradual; but everywhere the ordinary forest trees extend far into the pine-regions, especially the oak, the alder, the arbutus, etc. The lowest limit of the pines is usually 6500 to 6800

feet, and *pinus leuophylla* is the species first met with. The different forms of the Mexican coniferæ have not only been lately described, but miniature specimens of these dwellers on the Andes are seen in most botanic gardens; these, however, can afford no idea of the grandeur and majesty of these mountain-forests. The straight slender stems, often 100 or 120 feet in height, the close summits with the branches inclining downwards, the sharp-pointed leaves, now shorter, now longer, the cones sometimes quite small, sometimes immense, the frowning groups of *abies religiosa*, which are furnished with branches from the base upwards, the solemn stillness prevailing, interrupted only by the occasional scream of the blue jay, of the green aras, or the howl of some hungry wolf — all give rise to a feeling of loneliness, more oppressive even than that of the far-extending prairie. Ravines with foaming mountain-torrents, steep masses of rock, and green meadows, afford now and then some variety to the otherwise monotonous scenery; here, too, we find all the charms of Alpine vegetation. All is familiar to us, from the grasses *poa, festuca, agrostis, triticum*, etc., to the different species of clover, crow-foot, potentilliæ, gentianeæ, strawberries, and violets. The vacciniæ and one-berries are found here as in the north, the lupins and penstemoneæ blossom even at the height of 11,000 feet, where the alder already disappears, and nothing is found save the *pinus montezumæ*, the forest-tree of greatest elevation. The juniper species, are not met with so high; very few indeed grow on the east side of the mountains, but all the more on the west. The agave and cactus are only seen here and there between the rocks; they object to the moist climate of the eastern declivity, although they are not wholly unrepresented.

On the loftiest, most desolate portions of the mountains, the forest disappears,* but vegetation does not therefore cease. Large patches are still covered with grass, spiræa argentea, and small shrub-like steviæ indicate the character of the place; *veratrum frigidum, pedicularis, viola, alchemilla, arenaria, potentilla, auricula, castilleja* and others are everywhere woven into the fine carpet of grass; at the highest points we find *senecio*, with its silvery beard, the snow-thistle, completetely covered with grey felt, and lichens and mosses, as in the lofty regions of the north. Most of the mountain-ridges do not extend to this zone, but the enquirer has it in his power to observe the peculiarities of nature in still loftier regions. A good road conducts us up the volcano of Orizava, a height of 17,800 feet, to the everlasting snow limit, enabling us to observe every description of plant, from the palms to the crippled productions of the Polar regions, in its natural state. At an elevation of 14,200 feet, the grassy region is passed, and a tolerably steep cone of loose sand succeeds, with occasional masses of rock. At the first glance vegetation appears to have wholly ceased, nevertheless a few phanerogamia are still met with, especially where they can obtain a firm hold near the rocks. A small pale yellow and a bright

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* The extreme limit at which wood grows on the Orizava is about 13,500 feet. The pines met with are: *pinus leuophilla, p. Montezumæ, p. magrophilla, p. pseudo strobus, abies religiosa.*

yellow draba are found, besides sisymbrium and mouse-ear, arenariæ, shrub-like senecio, saussurea-thistle and several grasses, particularly a small avena.

At the height of 14,500 feet, all the phanerogamia have vanished, and the vegetation consists merely of mosses and lichens, which cover the separate rocks as high as 14,700 feet. The usual assumption is, that *lecidea geographica* is the plant attaining the greatest elevation in tropical America; on Orizava it is not so. Among the mosses are some, for example, grimmiæ, which extend as high as the lichens, at least as high as the lecideæ, until at length *parmelio elegans* rises above all. The botanists in general, who have carefully examined this region, and were well acquainted with the Scandinavian Alps, agree with Dr. Frederick Liebmann of Copenhagen, that in the vicinity of the snow-limit of the extreme north, the cryptogamia are more abundantly represented both as to number and variety, than under similar circumstances in the tropical zone. There where mosses and lichens flourish, the snow lies in every hollow, and on the north side of the rocks, the ground is frozen the whole year. A few steps further we are on the borders of the region of eternal snow or ice, for it is a compact mass of 18 or 20 feet in thickness, covered with loose snow, which is constantly thawing and being replaced.

From this boundary of organic life (insects, driven by the wind, are found high up on the snow), little streamlets produced by the thawing, trickle incessantly down the declivities; they unite and form torrents, frequently merging into small rivers.

From this "stand-point", which is higher than the summit of Mont-Blanc, let us again view the country we have traversed, before directing our gaze to the west. An interminable prospect lies before us, too extensive for every different object to be distinguished. We clearly recognize the mirror-like surface of the gulf, the darker forest-region of the coast, the lighter tracts of prairie-land. Then follow the sombre wavy lines of the forest-clad mountains, occasionally interrupted by cultivation. The chasms, indicating the water-courses, are distinctly recognized by their profound shade; solitary white dots in the midst of the foliage we presume to be churches and villages. The mountains ascend from terrace to terrace; we recognize the line of the pine-forests, where they are in full development, and the elevation where the trees completely disappear. From the threshold of rigid death, as from the North Cape, or the glaciers of Iceland, our eyes pass from the arctic zone and the pine groves of the north to the gardens of the Hesperides with their golden fruit, and thence to the glowing zone where the palms and the arborescent grasses are developed. An immeasurable panorama acquaints us with the physiognomy of the country, namely a gradual ascent of the soil from the sea to the ridge of the highlands, from there a gentle declining slope to the far-extending table-land or plateaus.

Let us now direct our attention to this side: for the first time we have an almost unlimited prospect to the west, north and south-west. To the east we have an unbounded horizon, extending far into the gulf, the plain only recognized at an

immense distance; on the other side it is close to us, at the foot of a steep height, on whose summit we now stand. Moderately lofty mountain-chains bound the plain, groups of mountains, mostly pointed, or with blunt cones interrupt the surface, whilst further to the west a lofty cordillera with a snowy summit closes the picture. No forests, no luxuriant meadows can be perceived in the valley, but on all sides cultivated fields, many villages and hamlets, also sand and moor, grey lava-masses, bare mountains, or slopes with a few scattered bushes or low trees. The contrast is so great, that it seems as though one were transported to a totally different country, from the south to the north, from the fragrant forest to the dreary heath.

For the present we have looked about us sufficiently, and will remain between the sea and the mountains, to observe some of the details. First of all let us bear in mind the physiognomy of the whole eastern side of the country. From the sea the land gradually rises to the height of 10,000 to 12,000 feet, then falls again some 3000 or 4000 feet, forming the extensive plateaus, which lie from 6000 to 8000 feet above the sea.

This physiognomy determines the temperature, it being a fixed rule that the thermometer falls as we ascend from the sea-level. If we assume that in 20° North latitude, the average temperature of the atmosphere at the surface of the ocean is 24° Reaumur, we perceive that at an elevation of 14,700 feet in summer, the thermometer falls to zero. Between summer and winter the snow boundary fluctuates perhaps 2000 feet; we may therefore take the average at 13,700 feet, although the boundary of the eternal snow lies higher, which has been ascertained by a barometrical measurement of different snowy peaks of this range. Not merely vegetation, but organic life in general, finds in this gradation of the climate a spot containing the conditions for its perfect development; a circumstance which sufficiently accounts for the vegetable and animal kingdom being so abundantly represented. Let us consider only the number of plants, which within a space of 70 miles (about the distance of the Gulf of Antigua or the mouth of the Alvorado river to the snow of the Peak of Orizava) are actually cultivated, or which the climate would permit being cultivated. In the lower regions, as high as 1500 feet, we have the cocoa-nut, cacao, vanilla, cotton, cloves, nutmegs, pepper, and the other spices of commerce, besides all the fruits of the tropical countries of the east and west; up to 4000 feet grow sugar and coffee, indigo and rice, tea, the banana and tobacco, besides the productive edible roots manioc, yam, arun, arrow-root, batata, curcuma and ginger, and all the fruits of America, Central Asia and Barbary. From here upwards begins the cultivation of the cerealiæ of the old world, such as barley and wheat, of the oleaginous plants (olive, poppy, rape, linseed), of pulse and kitchen vegetables, of wine and every kind of European fruit. The mulberry-tree finds its climate at the height of from 3000 to 6000 feet. The most tractable plant is the maize, which is advantageously cultivated from the coast to an elevation of 9000 feet. This useful plant yields in the torrid regions from three to four hundred fold in four months, whilst on the frigid heights it requires ten months before it is perfectly

ripe, and gives a yield of eighty to a hundred fold. Barley ascends higher than maize and is planted at 10,000 feet above the sea, which region is also fit for cultivating the potato. Of the countless solaneæ which the country produces, two tuberous-rooted ones are natives of the highest mountains; one with blue, the other with white blossoms. The blue-blossomed kind has been planted from the earliest periods, but only in lofty stations, for in the lower districts it produces only leaves and few bulbs. I have remarked elsewhere that the edible potato is found growing wild everywhere in the highest mountains of Mexico; but one perceives at the first glance, that cultivation has changed the whole type of the plant, which indeed is the case with most cultivated plants; for we must assume that the tame potato and its cultivation were brought hither from some other country. The Aztec language has no name of its own for potato; it is termed "Pápa", and it is not ascertained to what language the word belongs. It is also named Camotli, which has probably the general signification, edible bulb, but is more especially applied to the *Convolvulus batatas*. This much is certain, that the cultivation of the potato does not extend very far, and is only met with on mountains and plateaus at an elevation above the sea of 8000 feet and upwards.

Far more general than the potato is the *Ferraria pavonia*, called by the Indians "kakomitl" or "oseloschutschil" (tigerflower); for this flourishes equally well at the height of 3000 as of 8000 feet. Only the aborigines plant this description of lily, and eat the roasted bulbous root, which in taste much resembles the chestnut.

The jalap-root *(Convolvulus* and *Ipomea jalapa)* is met with only in the humid ravines of the loftier mountains, but without being cultivated; the smilax species or sarsaparillas are natives of the forests at the height of from 3000 to 6000 feet.

In the old world the species of grain are grown in very hot climates, for example in Syria, Egypt and Barbary; it is therefore singular that in the temperate regions of the east coast of Mexico at the elevation of 4000 feet, where the average temperature does not exceed 18° Reaumur, neither wheat nor barley can be grown. The plants themselves vegetate exceedingly well, every seed-corn shoots forth from 20 to 50 stalks, the leaves become broad and dark-green, but the ears are light, all the husks are empty. By repeatedly pruning the plant before it shoots into the stalk, germinating seeds may be obtained, but not sufficient to render the cultivation advantageous. Only the oats yield well, but are of little importance, as they are used for feeding alone, for which purpose maize is in every respect preferable. —

Before closing this chapter, I must allude to a prejudice existing in Europe, which I am wholly unable to comprehend. Frequently I have been asked if the flowers of America were really scentless, and the birds without song. Unfortunate country to which the Creator has given such matchless beauty of form, such wondrous tints, and yet denied all fragrance. Bounteous nature is no step-mother. What delightful odours do we not meet with in the large family of the orchideæ! At a distance of several hundred paces, the stanhopeæ, *epidendrum odoratum*, and others diffuse their subtle aroma through the forest. In the twilight several kinds of *cestrum*

fill the atmosphere with an enchanting perfume, and not less so the *datura grandiflora*, a single tree being sometimes covered with hundreds of white blossoms. The acacias and mimosas have partly the powerful fine scent of the wall-flower, but the large trees are overwhelmed with blossoms. Of many other families of highly odoriferous plants, I need only mention the serbereæ and tabernamontaneæ, honeysuckle, jessamine, pothos and calla, eugeniæ, ocoteæ, nictagineæ, liliaceæ etc.; among the syngenesists are many very sweet-smelling specimens, and a light breeze from the forest often conveys a perfect cloud of most delicious odours to the wanderer.

It is precisely the same with the singing-birds; the mocking-bird, the blue song-thrush, various silviæ, finches, tanagras and others are by no means inferior to the songsters of the old world.

VI.

THE PLATEAUS.

From the mountain-ridge we cast a passing glance at the table-land; we will now examine it nearer. It is singular in tropical and sub-tropical regions to behold a country, the climate of which is not unlike that of southern Europe, in consequence of the elevation above the sea averaging from 5000 to 8000 feet. Its extent is about 1500 miles in length, by 500 in breadth. Either mighty plutonic influences must have heaved up the whole country, or being the loftiest mountain-range of the globe, it was undermined and destroyed by fearful volcanic convulsions, and fell in; in the course of ages the great bed of the valley was levelled by the constant action of water. From the frontiers of Guatemala to the Gila river similar appearances are met with; under the 17th degree we find in the Province of Chiapas, plains with lakes, seven thousand feet above the sea, enclosed with lofty mountains covered with pine-forests and oaks; and the same thing is met with in 33° N. Lat. The table-land is continuous from south to north, sloping downwards towards the Atlantic and the South Pacific Ocean, intersected with numerous mountain-chains, which, however, never completely interrupt the communication of the plateaus with each other, nor produce any material difference in the level. From the 18th to the 13th degrees there are carriage-roads, and from Mexico to Chihuahua, a railroad could easily be constructed. Nevertheless certain large hollows may be clearly distinguished, being enclosed by the mountains, and the bottom filled apparently with stagnant waters. The lowest point of these hollows is occasionally indicated by lakes, or in the rainy season by pools, or deposits of common salt, brought thither by the rush of the tropical rains.

PLATEAU OF PUEBLA.

HOCHEBENE VON PUEBLA. MEXICO. LLANO DE PUEBLA.

The character of the landscape is totally different from the coast-region. The vegetation has nowhere a tropical appearance, neither is it so perfectly developed, nor in such exuberant masses. The grasses are short and fine, the trees low, the mountains bare. Tufa and other rubble cover the slopes, a scarcity of water is almost everywhere remarked, which accounts for the scanty vegetation, particularly in the dry season. And yet precisely here, we meet with abundance of succulent plants, presenting man and beast with a new source of existence. In most places, north and south, the cactus, agave, and yucca, with the mimosa, and syngenesists, especially bacharis, senecio etc., determine the character of the landscape. The traveller, who in the morning has admired the most luxuriant vegetation, in the vicinity of Jalapa for example, where amidst a confused mass of lianas and brushwood, the arborescent ferns are so strikingly beautiful, in the evening imagines himself transported to some far distant region, when regarding the vegetable products of the plain of Perote. In a valley extending farther than the eye can reach, and from fifteen to twenty miles in width, wheat, maize, barley, pulse, etc., are carefully cultivated; here and there villages and large farm-yards are observed. Trees, however, are rare in the plain, if we except some mournful-looking cypresses, sabines, or *schinus molle* near the churches and chapels. The eastern cordilleras exhibit pines, but the western hills and mountains are bare, with the exception perhaps of some stunted bushes on the sides of the steep cones and craters. On all sides the agaves *(agave americana)* bound the fields and roads, and surround the scattered dwellings.

The culture of the cerealiæ of the old world is promoted by artificial irrigation, wheat in particular, which is harvested in autumn. In some of the higher valleys barley and maize even require irrigation, the rainy season not being long enough to enable them to attain their maturity. The soil unfit for cultivation is usually turned into pasture-ground; on the steep, rocky declivities even, and on the hardened lava tracts, brown and white goats may be seen in search of food. All these mountains and masses of rocks bristle with prickly cactus plants, in the most whimsical and divers forms. Small, and very prickly mamillarieæ, scarcely raise themselves above the ground, groups of a larger kind nestle in the clefts of the rocks, melocacteæ and echinocacteæ of all dimensions start up, from the size of a fist, to the altitude of a man, from one to three feet in diameter, furnished with short or long, with straight or curved prickles. The opuntiæ or Indian figs are crowded together in distinct groups, differing in form, size and colour of the leaves or branches, and in blossom and fruit. The cereeæ creep like snakes along the ground, cling to the branches of trees and to the rocks, or rise in the form of a pillar thirty or forty feet above the generality of their species. There is one singular species called "organos", whose appearance is almost incredible. A thick ungainly trunk, from four to six feet in height, bearing several hundred upright multangular pillars of all sizes, which being tallest in the middle, and smaller on either side, resemble a large organ. The mountains, where frequently thousands of these plants are seen, are not unlike walls of columnar basalt. This stiff, shadeless vegetation is in many dis-

tricts quite in accordance with the character of the landscape, with the grey rocky masses of volcanic or with the yellowish calcareous mountains. The cacteæ, however, are not met with on the mountains only; vast plains are covered with the same plants, interspersed with various agaves, yuccas in the form of thick trees with numerous branches, with the green stiff fasciculate leaf at the end of each stem-like branch; but also elegant yuccas with depending supple leaf, for example in the plains of Masquital, from Tula to Ouretoxo, in the valley of Ixmiquilpan and Actopan. The stiff dasylirieæ represented in various species, belong wholly to this crystal-like vegetation, and in the calcareous mountains, but only in these, the lower fan-palms *(chamerops)* and the before-mentioned syngenesists.

Thorny arborescent mimosas are met with in these districts, producing abundance of transparent gum, which in spring give the tree the appearance of being covered with dew-drops. According to the locality we occasionally meet with other kinds of trees, such as the pine, oak, arbutus, juniper, cypress, taxodium, alder, and willow; but from the 16th to the 32nd degree North Latitude, the prevailing character of the vegetation is as already shewn. The appearance of a country is everywhere changed by cultivation, and the fertile plains of Anahuac* having for centuries been the seat of a dense population, these districts are of course no longer a wilderness overgrown with cactus.

The plains of Tlascala and Huatmantla, of Puebla, Mexico, Queretaro, Morelia, and Guanajuato present landscapes, resembling those of Southern Europe. Numerous towns, villages, and farms surrounded by olive, fig, cherry, apple, quince, and other trees, avenues of poplar and ash, orchards, and kitchen-gardens of all kinds, would make us forget that we are on the ridge of the Andes, if the plantations of maguey, the garden hedges of cactus did not remind us of Montezuma's empire. On approaching the mountains, however, or even a hill, where the water is unable to approach, the highland character is again evident. The lakes of the table-land give birth to white-blossomed nymphareæ, reeds, sedge, as in Europe; on the roads thither, we find a small shrublike convolvulus, mirabilis of all colours, yellow and white argemoneæ, thorn-apples; milk-wort, verbeneæ, plantagineæ, chenopodiæ, penstemon, and other well-known herbaceous plants, whilst the shrubs chiefly consist of syngenesists.

The cactus has been termed the vegetable spring of the wilderness (see: Humboldt's Glances at Nature), and certainly not unjustly, for without them and the agaves, the sterile mountains of the plateaus being so poor in water would be uninhabitable for man and beast.

In the dry season, from November till June, when for many leagues no trace of water can be met with, when the grass disappears, the oxen and horses depend on the opuntia for nourishment; their instinct teaches them to remove the thorns and wool on the top of the thick echinocacteæ with their horns or hoofs, and to

* Ancient Anahuac comprehends the country between the 14th and 21st degrees, North Latitude.

bite in the succulent flesh, so that a little reservoir is formed. During the night the clear sap collects in this, and in the morning quenches the animals' thirst; the reservoir refills itself for several weeks in succession. The animals know their watering places well, return thither every morning, and defend them against usurpers. In the large unwooded plains of Northern Mexico, the heights covered with the cactus are of great value to man. The young leaves of the opuntias are used as a favourite vegetable, the juicy fruit eaten raw is highly refreshing; dried and pressed, it is not unlike the fig, and forms an object of traffic. The juice of the fruit is sometimes converted into syrup, sometimes, slightly fermented, and termed *colonche*, it forms a substitute for wine at the festivals of the shepherds and mountaineers.

The maguey or agave is not less useful as a spring in the desert. When the plant is full grown, in its tenth or fifteenth year, and is preparing to throw up its long flower-stem, the cultivator cuts out the leaves which form its centre, and hollows it out into the shape of a bowl, at the same time removing most of the other leaves, so that the whole sap destined for their supply flows to the great stem, and is received by the bowl-shaped cavity, into which it runs with great rapidity. It is removed every morning and evening (by means of a vessel constructed of a kind of gourd), easily ferments, and is the favourite drink called *pulque*.

The employment of the sap of the agave for this liquor is evidently very ancient, and it appears that it was cultivated by the Aztecs, who in the twelfth century established themselves on the central plateau. At all events the mode of extracting the sap from the plant is represented in their hieroglyphic paintings. In the earlier half of the Christian era, the Toltecs also planted the agave, and treated it in the same manner as the Indians. Their inherited customs are stereotype, as we shall shew when we describe their peculiarities.

In European hot-houses, the agave plant is met with of considerable size, nevertheless it is dwarfish in comparison with that which it attains in its native country. A large plant produces daily about eight bottles of sap (smaller ones, from four to six bottles), for a space of four or five months. The hollow is cleansed every day of all its slimy parts, with a flat iron spoon, and is thus gradually enlarged. The greatest quantity of sap flows in the second month. The liquor is not clear, but whitish, something like whey, and precipitates little balls of farina. When newly fermented, pulque has an agreeable winy flavour, is intoxicating and refreshing, and agrees very well with most persons; the natives seldom use it till it has acquired a strong taste, and a disagreeable fetid smell, denominated *fuerte*, when it is esteemed in high perfection. The quantity of alcohol is about the same as in strong beer, but would be greater if more efficiently fermented. The sap is usually collected in ox-hides, which throughout the country are employed as tubs or buts, and as these cannot be thoroughly cleansed, part of the liquid to be fermented is converted into vinegar, and loses alcohol in proportion. It may appear strange that ox-hides should be used as tubs; the manner in which this is performed is as follows:

A frame-work three or four feet in width is constructed of four stout round pieces of wood, flattened at the ends, and bound together with strips of hide. This is placed on four stakes, forked at the ends, and about five feet in length, driven into the ground; a fresh ox-hide is then cut square, and with the hair inside, fastened with strips of the same material to the frame, so as to form a sack. This is completely filled with dry sand or stones, in order equally to stretch the elastic hide, in which state it is suffered to dry. In a few days it has become a hard vessel, capable of lasting several years, and easily constructed by the person requiring it, at an expense of certainly not more than fifteen or twenty pence. Similar tubs or vats are still seen in most of the brandy distilleries. Of course they are not particularly clean, as the hairy inner surface cannot be rinsed like a wooden tub, but no Indian would relish the flavour of his pulque, if it had not fermented in a hide. Enormous quantities of it are consumed, especially in the larger towns. There are estates boasting of twenty to forty thousand such plants, and producing a yearly rental of from 25,000 to 30,000 piasters. Caravans of several hundred mules are frequently met with, conveying the Indian nectar to the towns in goat-skins. One should see the happy faces of the Indians, squatting in a circle without distinction of sex, and passing round the filled "schikals" (large gourds), one must see them staggering home from their feasts, in order to comprehend how so vast a quantity of sap can be consumed. In districts where water is rarely seen, and where the agave flourishes most remarkably, it is often very difficult to procure a glass of water in the dry season, whilst every Indian willingly offers a cup of pulque.

The agave is not esteemed on account of its sap only. The strong leaf-fibre is an excellent material, the only one in the high country for ropes and strong cables, for thread, etc. Sacks, or even cloth may be woven of it. The fibres of a species with smaller leaves, "ixtle", form a considerable article of traffic in the more extensive districts. The stem of this smaller species is roasted and eaten, and a peculiar Indian liquor distilled from it, termed "mescal" or *vino mescal.* In the agave districts the aborigines live almost exclusively on this plant. They build their huts with the long dry flower-stem, cover them with the leaves, which are disposed like tiles, and fastened with the thorns; the dry leaves serve for fuel; the plant furnishes them with food, drink and clothing, and is therefore well deserving of particular notice.

The general sketch I have offered of the plateaus, admits of various modifications, according as the geognostic peculiarities, or the local climatic appearances exercise their influence. I have already mentioned, that volcanic rock, porphyry, basalt, or their decompositions produce certain botanic groups, calcareous rock others. A ferruginous soil is more favourable for oaks and mimosas, a quartz soil for pines. Thus we find in the calcareous soil of Tehuacan many cactus and palms, and even numerous date-palms, in the calcareous mountains of San Luis Potosi, the rarest and finest melocacteæ, further north in the mountains of Mazapil, the gigantic mammillariæ of a beautiful purple tint. Even the vine flourishes best on a calcareous

soil, both in the north and south of the table-land. The richest soil for grain is in the valley of Puebla, and in the plains from Queretaro to Guanajuato, where wheat and barley yield fifty fold, the maize two hundred fold. In the plains where the soil contains natron, nothing but low grass is produced, which is exclusively used as pasture-ground for the horses and mules. In some parts the quantity of natron is so considerable, that after the rainy season the whole surface is encrusted with it. It is now and then employed for technical purposes (*viz.*, for soap-boiling). The well-watered valley of Toluca, although more than 8000 feet in height, is surrounded by mountains producing wood, and affords rich corn-crops, whilst warmly situated valleys boasting of a good soil are almost sterile, the position of the mountains warding off the showers during the rainy season.

In districts where the vegetation is so poor the rays of the sun are sometimes powerfully reflected from the bare, often white, face of the mountains, the lower stratum of air uncommonly heated, and those singular mirages given rise to, exhibiting, not an image reversed in the skies, but by an image of the blue sky near the ground, causing lakes to appear before us, in which trees and grazing animals are reflected. The deception is so complete, that even the thirsty horses neigh at sight of it, and the dogs hurry towards it to cool their parched tongues. It happened even once to my servant, who begged my permission to ride to the lake and drink. Jestingly I bade him do so, but not overdrink himself. He now eagerly galloped after the phantom, until I had nearly lost sight of him, and returning out of temper; he thought: "matters were not quite as they should be; that some sorcerer had been playing tricks with him."

From the month of March till June the dryness and heat on the table-land are greatest; on the heights, and wherever water is wanting, the trees lose their foliage; the course of the rivers and brooks, however, is indicated by greening bushes and trees. A dense blueish fog mostly fills the atmosphere, causing the sun to appear rayless, arising from the heated state of the lower strata of air. At this period, too, vertical atmospheric currents often take place, whirling grass and dry leaves to an immense height.

All these phenomena vanish on the approach of the rainy season, the air is then most pure, everything assumes its green covering. The winter months, nevertheless, are somewhat raw; on the more elevated plateaus, night-frosts are not uncommon, snow occasionally falls, which, however, rarely lies more than a day, and in the northern highland valleys sometimes a week.

Not only has the surface of the table-land a totally different character from that of the eastern slopes; but the appearance and mode of life of the people, even the animal creation, are quite otherwise.

In order not to diverge from our subject, we shall occupy ourselves with animated nature in a subsequent chapter.

VII.

THE DECLINATION TOWARDS THE SOUTH SEA. CLIMATE.

In a former chapter I directed attention to the gigantic forms, and uninterrupted succession of the highlands of Mexico, South America also has plateaus, and those of Quito, Cusco, Cundinamarca are in part loftier than those of Mexico. But they are separated from each other by profound and extensive valleys, and bounded by those enormous chasms with a tropical climate, from which one ascends with incredible fatigue to the cold Paramos. Not so in Mexico, where from south to north, travellers and merchandise meet with uninterrupted vehicular transmission. Although there are three principal mountain ranges, at least from the 20th degree northwards, *viz.*, an eastern, a western, and a middle range, the last is so formed that the connection with the table-land is everywhere feasible by means of broad valleys. The declination towards the sea is less favourable for travellers. Notwithstanding, there are some roads on the east side; and the northern part, in particular, presents no impediment whatever to vehicular communication. In the south, indeed, the descent of the mountains from Chiapas to the Gulf is so steep, that it is impossible even to employ mules, and both goods and travellers must be conveyed on the backs of the Indians.

The western slope is not precisely the same as the eastern; taken altogether it is less abrupt, and yet in part more difficult for the construction of roads. If we regard the transverse section of the country by Humboldt, Burkhardt and others, we perceive three chief graduations from the plateaus to the South Sea; we descend from the higher to the lower, but must always cross another mountain-range, which conducts us from the region of palms to the oaks, and pine-forests. In some parts the mountain-ranges and deep valleys alternate so frequently, that on a single day's journey we pass repeatedly through the most opposite climates, sometimes resting beneath the shade of the bananas, sometimes of the oaks and strawberry-trees *(arbutus)*. Here, too, on the borders of the plateaus, we have several snow-mountains, Popocatepetl, Toluca and Colima, which present us with every species of vegetation, at very short intervals. Volcanic mountains are most prevalent, extending almost as far as the sea, where the shores of the bays, the promontories and reefs consist of granite, which on the east side are unseen. On the west side, the volcanoes are in activity in Jorullo and Colima, and in the highest of the Mexican mountains, Popocatepetl.

The character of the landscape is very different from that of the eastern slope, although most of the plants are analogous. The effects produced by the trade-winds, which on the east coast give rise to clouds and moisture, are here

wanting; the country is drier and hotter, the dense luxuriant forests are rarer, whilst more grasses, and a slight growth of mimosas and terebinthias are met with. Of these resiniferous trees, the copal kinds are most frequent, of stunted growth and grey leaf, which with the mimosas almost every-where cover the heights. The sea-coast is rather rocky than sandy; safer bays than those in the Gulf are favourable to navigation. Dense palm-forests, of the thick-stemmed, fanleaved sabal palm, border the lagoons of the coast, which are rocky basins, closed towards the sea by a narrow bar of sand, which, however, is covered at high water. The valleys irrigated by the rivers are hot, but extremely fertile, and adorned with charming groups of palms (the oil-palm and a sort of cocoa), cæsalpiniæ and figs.

The oaks are met with at an elevation of 3000 feet above the sea, and are here represented by some peculiar species. The species we first come to has a large hard leaf shaped like a spoon; it is used by the natives for various domestic purposes, for instance, as a salt-cellar. Higher up we find the olive-leaved oak, which is wanting on the east coast. Here, on the contrary, neither liquid amber nor platanes are seen, at least not below the 19th to the 20th degree of north latitude, whilst, instead, the banks of the brooks and rivulets, at an elevation of 3000 to 5000 feet, are grown with *cupressus disticha*, with ash and willow. The large cactus *(cereeæ)* extends in all directions, besides the bignoniæ, bombax, arborescent convolvulus and crescentiæ; fewer myrtles and laurels are met with, and generally much fewer lianæ, tillandsiæ and bromelieæ. The pines and alders descend much lower than on the eastern slope, the juniper and cypress are more numerously represented; the arbutus and labiateæ, especially tree-sage are also very common.

The variety of climate in New Spain naturally exercises great influence on the vegetable development. A short rainy season and a long drought only are known. For more than six months no verdure is seen in the whole of the extensive country, except where the roots of the plants are in immediate contact with water, consequently where natural or artificial irrigation is met with. There are districts towards the west, where the industry of man has made arrangements for artificial irrigation on a grand scale. In the fertile plains south of Mexico, lying to the west of the Popocatepetl, called the plains of Cuautla, Cuernavaca and Tetecala, watered by the rivulets that have their source in the snows of three lofty mountains, by means of expensive aqueducts, upwards of forty large sugar and coffee-plantations have been created, equal to the most considerable of the West Indies. In the plains of Mechoacan, too, extensive plantations are sometimes met with; though, strictly speaking they are but little oases in the uncultivated desert. Along the course of the rivers and larger brooks, in the vicinity of the mountains, Indian villages are met with, the inhabitants of which plant vegetables and fruits in artificially irrigated fields.

Wheels for drawing up water are often seen (their construction exhibiting a very slight acquaintance with mechanics), intended for the irrigation of melon-gardens during winter. Generally speaking, however, the seed is not sown till the commence-

ment of the rainy season, little being cultivated save maize, beans, and capsicum. Some districts of astonishing fertility are known, for example, the plain of Iguala, where the maize yields 600 fold.

The yield of cotton on the coast is plenteous, the quality good, but there is a want of hands in the plantations, and the dwellers on the plateaus shun the coast as carefully as they would the infernal regions. The country is very thinly peopled, and would have still fewer inhabitants, if the mountains towards the South Sea were not so rich in metals. Most of the towns and villages owe their origin to miners, and new colonies are founded by them alone. In these mountains mining is very ancient; before the Europeans discovered America, the Aztecs diligently worked the diggings of Tlaschko, where at the present day the mining-town of Tasco is built upon silver. From Tchuantepec to Arispe, and further to the north, the mountains between the sea and the table-land are metalliferous. In the north of Sonora are extensive gold-fields, richer perhaps than those of California. Silver, copper, lead, and iron have been found everywhere, but the rich veins can scarcely be said to have been opened, for want of hands to prosecute such undertakings with advantage. When in the course of time the Germanic population penetrates farther south, and the Hispano-Indian race is replaced by one more energetic and enterprising, the extraordinary wealth of this country will be duly appreciated.

These mountains have a remarkable number of salt-springs. At Istatlala, Istapan, and elsewhere hot salt-springs discharging much gas, issue from the soil. In the western district the salt-springs are so numerous, that the Indians merely pour the water on flat stones, round which they construct sides of resin, and leave the process of evaporation to the sun. So much salt is required for the amalgamation of the silver ore, that a hand-pump and a few copper pans would be a great source of profit; in these countries, however, labour has not made such striking progress.

As a supplement to our remarks on the surface of the country, a few observations on the climate and on the change of seasons which cause various meteorological phenomena will not be out of place. Throughout the year, day and night are nearly equal in the tropics, the difference, naturally, being greater or less, according to the distance from the equator. In Central Mexico the longest day has 13, the shortest 11 hours. Twice a year (in May and July) the sun is in the zenith, and in May the beautiful constellation of the crosier which adorns the southern hemisphere for six months, attains its meridian. There are two seasons only in the tropics: the rainy and the dry season. The rainy season is from June to November; this is the finest period of the year, the period when vegetation is most active, when all is verdure and blossom, the period for sowing and reaping. When in the month of May till the middle of June the intense heat has dried up everything, when the atmosphere is sultry and thick, but at the same time cloudless, the trees bare of foliage, peals of thunder in the mountains announce that Heaven's flood-gates are on the point of being opened. The rainy season commences with mighty electric discharges, flash succeeds flash, and the roar of the thunder, especially in the moun-

tains, is terrific. Heavy showers are discharged from the clouds; the drops cannot be distinguished, nothing but sheets of water; in half an hour, however, all is over. These storms occur usually towards evening, or according to the locality, before midnight, or towards daybreak. The clouds then gradually collect about the loftiest mountain-peaks, there become denser and denser, and descend to the valleys and plains. The figurative language of nations has connected these phenomena with mythology; the Greek beheld Jove gathering the clouds about Olympus; the Aztec awarded the same occupation to Atlanchana, the mother of the waters, on the Citlaltepetl (Peak of Orizava). Other mountains about which the clouds gather, are distinguished by names indicating a net-work of water, *viz.* Matlacury, Matlaquia-huatl, etc.

The thirsty soil greedily imbibes the first showers, and awakens the slumbering germs of the plants. In a few days the earth is covered with a delicate coat of verdure, the trees shoot with incredible rapidity, the peasant can plough the moistened ground, and plant his summer crop. During the first fortnight of the rainy season, the showers are regularly accompanied by electric phenomena; afterwards it continues to rain at a fixed hour, but many days frequently elapse without thunder being heard. The air is now exceedingly pure and mild, the morning sky deep blue, the horizon remarkably distinct. The subterranean reservoirs are soon filled, and springs gush forth on all sides; the beds of rivers hitherto dry, now exhibit vast masses of water, lakes are given birth to in the plains, and the numerous artificial reservoirs also become filled. In many parts of the table-land, namely, where a scarcity of water prevails, moderately broad valleys, where the fall is not great, are inclosed with extensive dikes, and artificial lakes thus constructed, partly in order to irrigate large farms, partly to serve as watering-places for the cattle. Smaller tanks are met with everywhere in the highlands, which are also filled in the rainy reason, to serve as watering-places during the ensuing drought.

During the dog-days the rain is less regular, little showers fall suddenly, and at all hours of the day, or several days pass without a drop falling. The countryman dreads this season; he says, it easily rains worms on the maize, or mildew on the beans; sudden changes of temperature naturally affect the health both of vegetables and animals. When the dog-days are over, violent storms recommence, succeeding each other regularly, and attaining their highest pitch towards the middle of September, or the autumnal equinox. Then gradually decreasing, pauses intervene, and about the end of October they disappear wholly. This is the finest season of the year: the air is fresh and clear, day and night are perfectly cloudless, vegetation is in full vigour, the pastures are green, the herds in prime condition, and water is still universally plentiful.

The close of the rainy season is ordinarily announced by the birds of passage arriving from the north. When a species of plover (grey and white with black about the neck) is heard at night, and sandpipers appear on the banks of the ponds and lakes, then the rain is over. Large flocks of water-fowl now arrive on the

lakes of the table-land, ducks of all kinds, the same as are met with in North America, water-hens, herons, tantalus etc. Geese and cranes keep further to the north, but enter the tropics, nevertheless. The migratory falcons arrive at the end of September, the swallows, however, leave in October, though there is no want of food.

November is distinguished for its fresh pure air; the heat is bearable, even in the coast-districts; the noxious fevers of the lowlands disappear, and the traffic of the country is renewed. During the rainy season, the communication with various districts is completely interrupted, partly because the swollen rivers, unprovided with bridges or fords, are impassable, partly because the narrow mountain and forest-paths are obliterated. On the plateaus, and on the whole of the west-coast, the rain has now ceased, but on the east side the *nortes* (northerly storms) begin. At longer or shorter intervals (8, 14 or 20 days) violent storms come suddenly across the sea from the north, agitating the gulf in its profoundest depths, often for 24 hours only, often for eight or ten successive days. The experienced countryman or shepherd can mostly foresee the coming of a "norte". The spiders render their nets firmer, the little red ants convey their larvæ to a dry spot, the migratory ants remove from the valley to the hills, the vaquero (a reddish-brown kite) screams, and at night the oxen crowd together in their pasture ground, with anxious bellowings. A sure indication is, when after great heat, a sudden calm prevails, succeeded immediately by a south wind; for then the north wind will be at hand in a few hours. A white-blossomed, sweet-smelling comelina, which sometimes remains for weeks without unfolding its buds, does so on the approach of the north wind. It is not the wind, but the moisture that exercises its influence on the plant. The wind raging across the sea, drives vast clouds towards the mountains, where they are condensed, and cover the heights with fog and fine rain, from 2500 feet to the ridge. The change of temperature within a few hours is remarkable, the thermometer in Vera Cruz often falling from 24 to 12 degrees; whoever has business in the open air, wraps himself in his cloak, and can scarcely make head against the wind. Nothing is felt of the storm in the interior, but the coolness of the atmosphere is very perceptible, and at an elevation of 2500 feet, the clouds repose on the ground. From here to the summit of the mountains, the soil is moistened with fine rain, as long as the storm rages at sea; and precisely this circumstance renders the middling heights of the east coast so fertile, and well-adapted for cultivation, since here nature provides a sufficiency of moisture, which in other parts of the country must be procured by art.

The influence of the nortes does not extend so far as the plateaus; the clouds are limited to a certain height, and the traveller emerges from the clear sunlighted landscape into the thick grey fog. When the storm has ceased, the clouds often remain some days on the mountain, usually disappearing at night; a remarkable purity and freshness of the atmosphere is the consequence, and the whole mountain, as low as 8000 feet, is invariably beheld covered with snow.

Towards the vernal equinox the north winds cease, and some heavy thunder-storms usually succeed, which last till the middle of April, and are not unfrequently accompanied by hail. These highly fertilizing phenomena are met with only in the mountains, and never descend lower than 2000 feet.

The side of the country towards the Atlantic, has alone the privilege of winter-rains; all the other districts have then the dry season, as already shewn. The winter-months, from December to March, are very cool on the table-land, and cold towards the north. Rime, and night-frosts are not uncommon, the trees shed their leaves, grass and shrubs dry up. The morning air at this season is very keen and penetrating; the traveller should not neglect warm clothing, and should protect his mouth, partly that his lips may not crack, which is anything but pleasant, partly that he may not inhale the cold air. As soon as the sun rises higher, the lower stratum of air becomes warm, so that towards noon, an oppressive heat may perhaps be felt, especially there where dusty roads, and white rocks, destitute of all vegetation, increase the reflection of the sun's rays.

On the western slope of the mountains, the heat is much greater during the whole of the dry season; the soil dries up and exhibits deep fissures, the trees lose their foliage, the savannahs become grey, and the course of the streams through the valleys, is only now and then indicated by stripes of green. In the last three months the drought and heat increase daily: in the coast-regions of the South Sea, and in the more distant plains and valleys the noonday heat is almost insupportable, the nights sultry and oppressive. On the loftier mountain-ranges and on the plateaus the nights at least are fresh, whilst during the day the heat is scarcely equal to that of the summer in Central Europe. Man and beast wait anxiously for the approaching rainy season, and the first peal of thunder is greeted as though it were delightful music. The instinct of the cattle is very singular at this season. If the cows for example, are removed to other pastures, a sort of home-sickness would seem to be felt by them at this period, and frequently, after a long round-about journey of several days, they succeed in arriving at the meadows where they were born.

Let us now consider the climate of the country in general, and we shall find that according to its geographical position, it must necessarily be hot, its whole extent being within the tropical and sub-tropical zone; but the formation of the surface, the elevation above the sea, brings us into colder regions of air, and we find therefore under one and the same degree of latitude a regular gradation of temperature. It is usually thus described by the natives. "On the plateaus and loftier mountains the climate is cold, both the coasts are hot, and between it is temperate". Unsatisfactory as this account is, we find it in every description of Mexico. It would be more correct to say that, from the seashore to the height of 2500 feet, the climate is tropical; all the tropical vegetation is found within these limits, the average temperature being 24° Reaumur. This tract has all the advantages and all the annoyances of hot regions: quick and luxurious vegetation,

great fertility, but also mosquitoes, sand-flies, and sand-fleas, besides the danger of climatic fevers, intermittent fevers, bilious fevers, and putrid fevers; on the east coast the yellow fever appears, which is only met with on the shores of the Atlantic.

From 2500 to 4500 feet above the sea a sub-tropical climate is found, with an average temperature of 18° Reaumur. Many tropical plants flourish here even; but the air is fresher, the disposition to fever is not met with unless local causes are at hand, for example, marshes; the troublesome insects occur only in the dense forests, and near the streams, as during the summer in Europe.

On the mountains, up to 6000 feet, the average temperature is from 15 to 16° Reaumur, the climate of a European spring; it is perfectly healthy, and fit for the cultivation of the cerealiæ, and all the fruits of Southern Europe. All the plains and hills, situated from 6000 to 8000 feet above the sea, have a temperature, on the average not exceeding 14°. They exhibit the products of Central Europe, have a pure wholesome air, and so equal a climate, that the natives of every zone can settle here without anxiety.

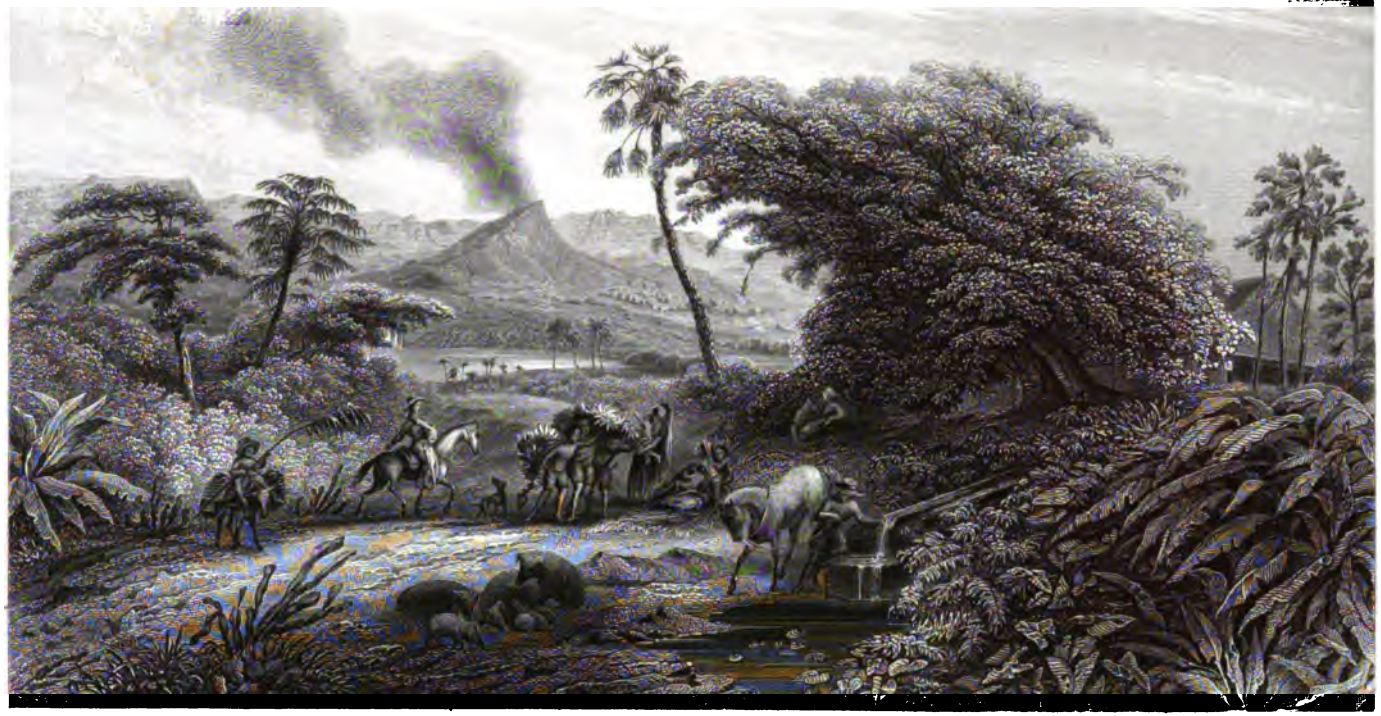
It will hardly be necessary to observe, that this is only a medium estimation. From the 16th to the 34th degree of north latitude, the isothermal lines cannot be the same; they decline towards the north, and ascend towards the south; thus, in order to be precise, one would be compelled to possess the meteorological observations of a long series of years, of different transverse sections from one sea to the other. These, however, do not exist. The result, however, is certain, that we find in Mexico every climate, the proper elevation for every branch of agriculture; and that this country can grow all the vegetable products of the earth, and thus be independent of every other country.

VIII.

VOLCANOES.

The workings of Nature in her profoundest laboratories are concealed from us; we see merely the results of mighty forces, sometimes heaving up mountains from the abyss, sometimes crumbling them to atoms, and often changing the appearance of whole districts within a few hours. In Mexico vast revolutions have been effected by volcanic agency; the cyclopean forges, indeed, are for the most part cold, but the subterranean fires are not everywhere extinct, and occasionally burst forth here or there, committing the most extensive ravages, or convulsing the earth with terrific spasms.

In the south a succession of volcanoes passing from Oajaca through Chiapas are connected with the burning mountains of Guatemala. Cempoaltepec, one of



VOLCAN JORULLO.

Darmstadt C G Lange

the loftiest points of the Cordilleras of Oajaca, is a volcanic cone; the frequent earthquakes on the plateaus of Oajaca always appear at the same time as those of Guatemala, so that a complete assemblage of volcanic agencies would appear to exist here.

The chief range of the Mexican volcanoes lies between the 19th and 20th degrees of north latitude, and may be traced from the Atlantic to the South Sea across the whole country. Near the Gulf shores, about 60 miles from Vera Cruz, the isolated mountain range of Tustla or San Martin rears itself above the plain. It is evident that the whole range must have swollen up like a vast bladder, and subsequently have been cleft by repeated eruptions and falling in. The highest point is about 3000 feet above the sea; several craters are visible, and also a round, very deep lake of fresh water on a little plateau on the south-west side, indicating a sunken hollow. In 1789 the last eruption of this volcano took place, which was preceded by an earthquake and subterranean thunder. A vast cloud of ashes was cast up to an incredible height, and carried off by the east-west current of air. In the towns situated 20 miles to the west, the ashes lay several inches deep in the streets and on the roofs, and even on the opposite side of the mountain, 8 miles off, in the village of Perote, everything was covered with ashes. Since then the volcano has been at rest, but in the depths, sounds as of distant thunder may be remarked. I have even heard it myself, especially towards the autumn. From the western heights it may distinctly be observed in the direction of Tustla, and the natives then say: "The Tustla growls!" The dwellers on the Tustla range, however, fancy they distinguish it in the direction of the Peak of Orizava, and call it, the thunder of Orizava. There is evidently a subterranean communication between the two mountains, as not only several volcanic summits rise on this line, but the earthquakes are felt most distinctly in this direction.

Orizava, the loftiest mountain of the eastern chain, exhibits at the first glance its volcanic origin; it forms a majestic cone, whilst on the magnificent snowy peak, somewhat to the east of the highest ridge, the vast crater is distinctly seen. Fifty years after the arrival of the Spaniards in Mexico, in 1569, the last eruption happened, which appears, however, not to have been accompanied by a discharge of lava. The eruption lasted almost without interruption twenty years, and this, perhaps, accounts for the opinion entertained in the following centuries, that the ascent of the mountain was impossible. In 1848 some North American officers were said to have attained the summit, but no one in the country believed it. Three years later, on the 26th March 1851, a party of 18 young men undertook the ascent. They passed the night at the point where vegetation ceases, at sunrise (6 o'clock) reached the ice, and commenced their dangerous expedition. Few only of the party (which consisted of two Frenchmen, one Englishman, one American, one Belgian, and 13 Mexicans) reached the edge of the crater; after a slight attempt, half of them returned exhausted. Six of the others attained a ridge of rocks, about half way up the snowy cone, on the north side, whence the ascent

took place, and which can be perceived from the sea. Here they rested, enjoyed the magnificent prospect, and then returned. The Frenchman, Alexander Doignon, after a fatiguing ascent of five hours and a half reached the highest point. The day was perfectly clear, the air pure and transparent, and not the slightest cloud obscured the lowlands. To the east the blue surface of the Atlantic, and Vera Cruz were distinctly seen, the whole of the coast and the bright prairies; the towns of Orizava and Cordova, St. Juan, Huatusco and Jalapa, the indented mountain-chain from north and south, the plateaus with their numerous villages and lakes, bounded by the snowy range of Popocatepetl; the immense landscape lay extended before the astonished gaze of the adventurer like a gigantic drawing. The crater lies something to the south-east of the highest point, and the crater is some hundred feet lower down. At the edge of the crater Doignon found a flag-staff six feet long, bearing the date 1848, and part of a North American flag, affording proof that the honour of having made the first ascent is due to the Americans. Only two of Doignon's companions, Majorus, a Belgian, and Contreras, a Mexican, reached the edge of the crater, though completely exhausted; the rarity of the atmosphere rendered the respiratory process difficult, blood flowed from their mouths, so that they were soon forced to return. Experiments made with the thermometer and with boiling water, shewed the height to be 18,178 feet (?). Severe headache, and extremely painful inflammation of the eyes was the consequence of this ascent.

The inhabitants of the little town of St. Andres, on the west side of the volcano, doubted the truth of Doignon's story, and this incited his ambition to venture on a second ascent, a week subsequent to the first, on the 4th April 1851. He was accompanied by a number of Mexicans, who, however, after a slight attempt, quitted him when they had reached the snow. This time the ascent was attended with great risk. Fresh snow had fallen, and covered the former track, the chasms and fissures were concealed by it, at every step he sank in the loose snow, carrying at the same time a flag staff 18 feet long ($2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick), and a large flag, which he had wound about his body like a scarf. He arrived at the above-mentioned lofty rocks in safety. Here he missed the path, and went more eastwards (to the left) than the first time. An enormous chasm extending about half a league in a semicircle, 25 feet wide, and 400 deep, consisting within of terrace-like masses of ice, impeded his progress. Some fragile bridges of ice afforded the only means of passing it. He ventured across, met with and crossed several fissures, encountered the greatest dangers, owing his miraculous preservation to his mental and bodily elasticity. Near the summit a steep wall of ice interposed itself, the exertion of climbing which called for all his remaining energies; exhausted, trembling, every moment in danger of being precipitated into the abyss, he at length surmounted this last obstacle, and was now able to rest for a time. At first he was shrouded in a dense fog, which, however, soon fell below the snowy cone. To the north-east, he perceived a succession of isolated rocks, several hundred feet high, rising like a ruined wall. The snow extended to the edge of the crater, within which, on the

THE VOLCANO OF COLIMA.

EL VOLCAN DE COLIMA. [illegible] *DER VULCAN VON COLIMA.*

north side, were deep fissures, reaching to the top. A rock at the edge of the crater, 15 feet thick, was quite hot, as was the soil round the same, and the ground trembled slightly at this spot. At this point, there is no snow, only sand and volcanic ashes. A powerful sulphur smell, proves the escape of sulphuric gas, and the ceaseless activity of the fire within. Both in the interior of the crater, and as far as the highest westerly point of the mountain, all is covered with pure sulphur, the soil being also heated. On the surface several rocks are completely glazed, but within, they are whitish, like burnt lime. The crater itself has an oval shape with two inlets to the south and east. The diameter at the top may be about 2000 metres, the circumference 6500. It forms a terrific abyss, with almost perpendicular sides, exhibiting black burnt fissures. We look down into a fearful gulf, which on the east side may be about 550 feet deep. In this gulf enormous black pyramidal rocks are seen, dividing it into three openings, two smaller ones to the south, the larger one to the east. On the north side about 150 feet from the edge of the crater, a gigantic, black, cleft, rocky pyramid, rises to the height of more than 400 feet. From the large opening to the east, volumes of steam strongly impregnated with sulphur, constantly rise as from a flue. A low rumbling is heard in the depths, causing a feeling of anxiety in the lifeless wilderness. The sides of the crater to the west and south-west are less steep, and covered with snow.

Doignon had planted his flag on the loftiest pinnacle; but a brisk ice-wind made him fear that it had been overthrown. He therefore once more returned to the summit, and believed, already, that he should be forced to pass the night at the foot of the warm rocks: the wind falling, however, he commenced his descent at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Amidst wondrous perils, he clambered downwards, was compelled to feel a great part of the way, and at 8 o'clock reached his companions at the foot of the glaciers. His great exertions on the snow-fields were succeeded by a night of much pain, and by a recurrence of the inflammation of the eyes, which was severer than the first time. In a few days he was recovered, and the gallant young man was honoured with a splendid banquet, and valuable presents by the inhabitants of St. Andres Chalchicomula, who were cured of their incredulity by the banner waving above the peak.

The ascent of Orizava afforded the proof that the subterranean fire was not extinguished, and that the lurking monster, like Etna, may again terrify those dwelling on, or near it, even after a lapse of three centuries. According to Doignon's measurement, the height is 18,178 feet English; Ferrar found that it was 17,885 feet, and the North American engineers, 17,819 feet. If we adopt the least of these three calculations, it would appear, that Orizava is the highest point of the Mexican Andes.

The base of the giant is surrounded for a considerable distance with smaller volcanoes; to the north-east and east we see a whole group of blunted cones between steep calcareous mountains, some of which have cast up lava, others mud and ashes; at all events the last appears to be distinctly indicated in the strata of

the sloping plain, stretching eastwards from the base of the volcanic mountain Acatepec. To the south and south-east are various craters, hot sulphur-springs, and springs which burst forth from rocky cavities like brooks. The course of the streams has probably been much altered by volcanic action. Two rivers, which rise on the east side of Orizava, suddenly disappear. The larger one, Jamapa, in a deep ravine, plunges into a fissure on the right bank, and reappears three miles further off, on the other side of a range of calcareous mountains, not in the ravine, but issuing from a cave more to the south. From the point where the river quits it, the bed of the ravine is dry. The other, called Tliapa, which foams as a raging torrent over the rocks, disappears near Cordova at the western base of a range of hills; at a distance of two miles, on the east side, the water reappears as a deep vortex, in a steep rocky inlet near the mountain-pass of Chiquihuite. This rivulet has further the peculiarity, that the chief source, which is high up in the pine-forests of Orizava, has milk-white, luke-warm water in winter, whilst in the rainy season it is clear and very cold.

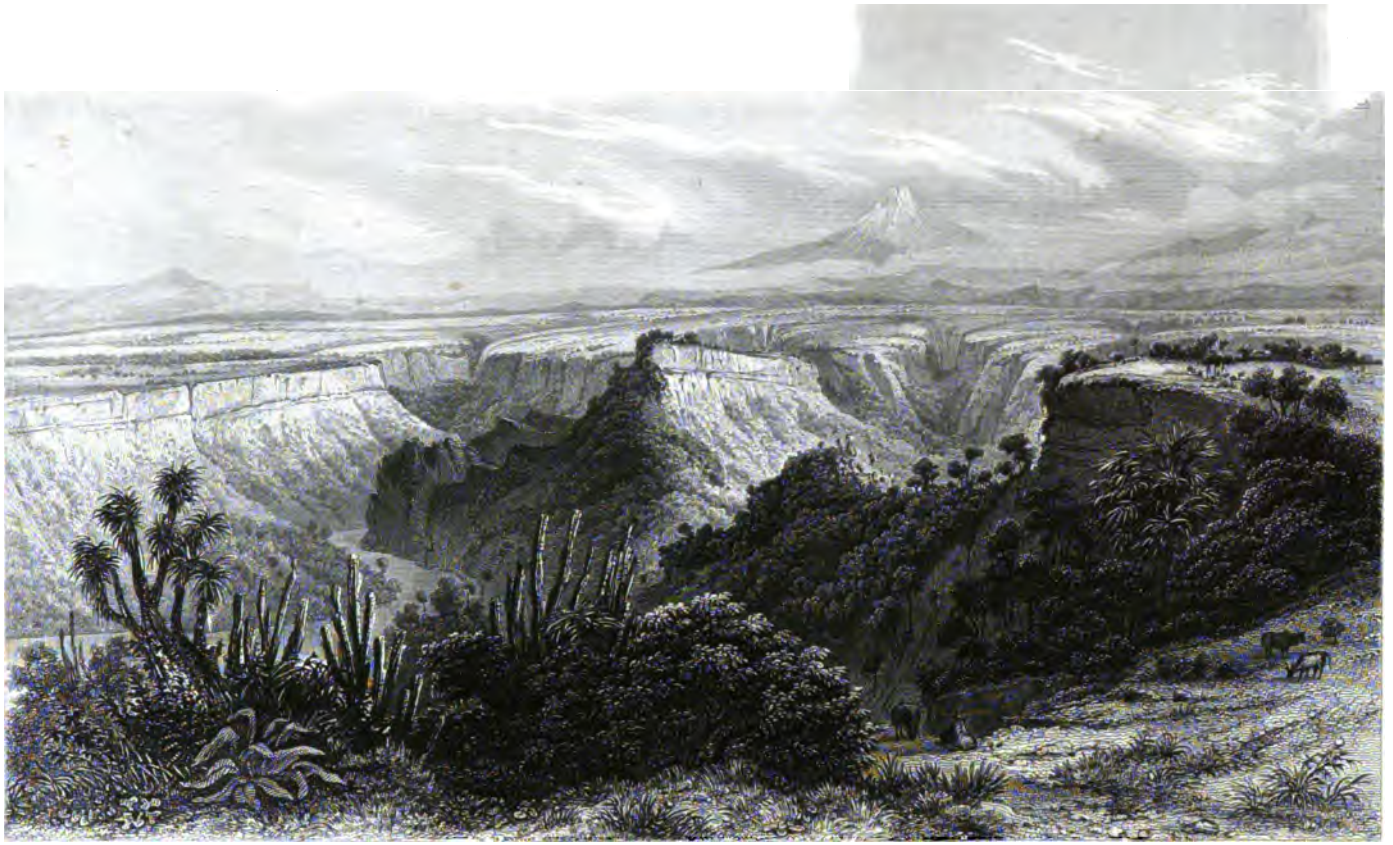
On the west side of the Peak, towards the plateaus, several volcanic appearances are also met with. Sulphureous vapours rise from a shrubless hill. The Indians use these warm sulphur exhalations to obtain vapour baths. They dig pits three feet deep and as many wide, then sit down in them and cover up the top so as to leave the head free. Not far off there is also a group of mountains called, *los derrumbatos*, one of which is cleft, and frequently belches forth flame.

In the plain at the foot of Orizava, towards the west, we see near the village of Aljojuca a crater filled with water, which tastes rather brackish, but can still be used for drinking. The whole of this round pool or lake is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile in circumference, with perpendicular rocky sides. From the bottom of the valley to the surface of the water the height is about 600 feet. A path made by the ancient Indians leads down into the hollow.

Further on, the steep cones of Pizarro and Tepeyacualco rear their summits above the plain; on the north side a mass of lava serves them for a pedestal.

In the principal mountain-chain the rival of Orizava was Naucampatepetl or Coffer of Perote. Perhaps it was the predecessor, and the other did not rise till after the fall of the former.

On the north-east side of the mountain the so-called "mal pais," a broad stream of lava, nearly 10 miles in length, whose glazed scoriaceous mass bears every indication of a molten state (bubbles on a large scale, explosions of gas), and the pumice-stone scattered far and wide, distinctly prove that a discharge took place in this direction. The mountain is most shattered on the south-east side, where it has an appearance as though an explosion from the summit to the base had hurled one whole side of the crater to the east. According to the height of the sun, we recognize by the light and shade the whole form of the crater and the destruction of the mountain. At its base, however, a beautiful plain, distinguished for its great fertility, was caused by this falling in, by the streams of lava, and



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BARRANCA (RAVINE) OF SANTA MARIA WITH THE HEIGHTS OF MIRADOR AND THE VOLCANO OF ORIZABA.

BARRANCA DE SANTA MARIA CON LOS ALTOS DEL MIRADOR Y EL VOLCAN DE ORIZABA.

MEXICO.

BARRANCA (SCHLUCHT) VON SANTA MARIA MIT DEN HÖHEN DER HACIENDA MIRADOR UND DEM ORIZABA.

the discharges of ashes and mud. The surface of the ground is here so very stony, that the plough can hardly make its way through the rubble; but the constant crumbling of this stone replaces the salts and earths necessary for the plants, so that since more than a century, maize has been annually sown in the same ground, without manuring, with the best result. In several places the upper earth is scarcely 3 or 4 feet deep, often less, and is succeeded by a stratum of porous lava; nevertheless the mightiest trees flourish in it. An accidental excavation explained this riddle to me: the lava stratum, namely, is only 2 or 3 feet thick, and with frequent clefts, beneath it is a fat, soft, blackish-grey soil with clay, which is followed by a second stratum of lava, and this again by loose earth. The roots of the trees penetrate through the crevices of the lava stratum, and seek their nourishment at a greater depth.

The perpendicular rocky walls, from 1000 to 2000 feet high, of the profound chasms which are met with for some miles in the volcanic soil, enable us to form an idea of the might of volcanic ravages. They are compact masses of firm conglomerate, with larger or smaller basalt fragments, a jumble of volcanic tufa with much feldspar. The upper earth is argillaceous of all colours, mostly ferruginous, and wherever water can exert its influence, iserin is washed out in great quantities. The breaking up of these mountains must have happened at a much earlier period, for horizontal stratification may be observed, divisions into separate stories, often with deep caves and grottoes at the base, but neither petrefaction, nor an admixture of lime.

I shall afterwards say more on the subject of these chasms, but must now confine myself to the succession of volcanoes in activity.

From Orizava we overlook the course of the principal volcanic elevations towards the west. Malinche or Matlacury, has a beautiful appearance, not unlike Vesuvius; it separates the plains of San Juan from those of Tlascala and Puebla. More distant are the volcanoes of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, both crowned with snow; and on the extreme horizon the snowy summit of the volcano of Toluca.

Popocatepetl (from the Aztec "popoca" to smoke, and "teptl" mountain) was considered since Humboldt's measurement the highest point in the country, being 17,773 feet. As early as the years 1824 and 1825, I repeatedly felt convinced that I had seen smoke rising from the crater, though I was disbelieved, at least by the natives. In April 1834 Mr. Frederick von Gerolt, now the Prussian minister at Washington, ascended to the summit, and soon after, communicated to me the result of his extremely wearisome expedition. According to his estimation the enormous crater is about a league in circumference, with steep, almost perpendicular sides of about 800 feet. At the bottom are two sulphur springs, the steam of which is precipitated in the lower part of the crater. In the upper part steam issues from numerous crevices, also impregnated with sulphur. They rise from the crater in larger or smaller volumes, and consequently may be seen at a distance. It is impossible to descend into the crater. At this height the cold is very intense,

but more troublesome is the rarefied atmosphere, which gives rise to an oppressive feeling of anxiety. On this mountain, as on Orizava, there is a sandy desert between the grassy-region and the snow.

After this first expedition, Popocatepetl was frequently ascended by Europeans. One party arrived at the summit, just as the bowels of the mountain were in combustion; the crater vomited forth smoke, and great masses of stone were cast up, though without reaching the edge, as they always fell back again into the abyss. Fine sand, only, was hurled high up in the air.

It is well known that the mountain was ascended by order of Cortes, and that the first visitors beheld molten masses in the crater, which they took for gold, and were at great pains to get out. It is also known that the sulphur was procured from this crater at great risk, which served the Spaniards for the fabrication of the first powder in Mexico. The volcano has therefore been in activity since three centuries, without exhibiting any violent eruption.

The neighbouring snow-mountain Iztaccihuatl (from "iztac" white, and "cihuatl" woman) bears the same relation to Popocatepetl, as the Coffer of Perote to Orizava; it is a ruined flue of the same hearth. Warm sulphur springs are very common, not only in the neighbourhood of this range, but at a considerable distance from it; in the plains of Puebla to the east, and in the Valley of Mexico to the west. There is also a complete succession of small volcanic cones, for instance, in the above-named valley, are five close together, whose evident craters and lava discharges leave no doubt as to their origin.

This volcanic chain which is very broad is continued more or less in a west north-west direction, rises again in Nevado de Toluca above the snow-level, and from there gradually declines towards the sea. Toluca would seem to be extinct; but enormous rents shew the traces of former craters, and on two of the highest points we find lakes as clear as crystal in the hollows of old craters.

From Toluca to the South Sea, two more volcanoes are still active, Jorullo and Colima, the latter since the earliest known periods, the other a recent production of the mighty subterranean fires, which in the middle of the last century called forth terror and dismay on all sides. Humboldt's description of the origin of this volcano is as follows: "The great catastrophe which gave rise to the volcano of Jorullo, and completely changed the surface of a wide extent of country, is one of the most extraordinary physical appearances, mentioned in the annals of the natural history of our planet. Geology has indicated the points in the ocean, where in later times, that is, since 2000 years, volcanic islands have been cast up from the bottom of the sea, for instance, in the neighbourhood of the Azores, in the Ægean Sea, or off the coast of Iceland; but it offers no instance of a mountain having been suddenly formed of lava and ashes, in the midst of thousands of small burning cones, the summit rising to a height of 1200 feet above the level of the surrounding plain; and this, too, in the interior of a continent, at a distance of 36 leagues from the coast, and 42 from the nearest volcano in action.

"From the hills of Aguascarco nearly to the villages of Teipan and Petatlan, both known for their excellent cotton-plantations, a wide plain extends, about 2200 to 2500 feet above the sea. Some basalt ranges rise in the midst of a district, in which green-stone porphyry predominates. The summits are decked with olive-leaved and willow-leaved oaks, alternating with graceful palms — a beautiful vegetation, contrasting strangely with the bare plain, burnt up by volcanic fire.

"Till the middle of the eighteenth century, there were large fields of sugar-cane and indigo between the rivulets of Cuitimba and San Pedro; they were surrounded with basalt-mountains, whose formation seems to indicate, that in remote antiquity, the country was much disturbed by volcanoes. The fields belonged to the "hacienda" San Pedro Jorullo, one of the largest and richest in the neighbourhood. In the month of June 1759 subterranean rumblings were heard: terrific peals of thunder were accompanied by frequent shocks of an earthquake, which for fifty or sixty days filled the population with fear and dismay.

"At the beginning of September everything seemed to announce perfect tranquillity, when suddenly on the night of the 28th, an awful subterranean disturbance broke out. The terrified Indians fled to the mountains of Aguascarco, and soon after, a whole district, some square miles in extent, called Malpais, rose like a bladder. The limits of the phenomenon may be recognized by the stratification of the soil. At its edge the raised mass is only 12 metres above the old level of the plain of Jorullo. But towards the centre the elevation gradually increases till it attains the height of 160 metres.

"The witnesses of this grand phenomenon, which they observed from the mountains of Aguascarco, affirm, that they saw flames issuing from a space of more than half a square league in extent, that large red-hot masses of rock were hurled up to an enormous height, and that, through a dense cloud of ashes, they beheld reflected in the volcanic fire, the mollified surface of the earth swelling up like a turbulent sea. The rivulets Cuitimba and San Pedro were then lost in the burning scoriæ. The decomposition of the water increased the ardour of the flames, so that the fire was seen in Pascuaro, a town nineteen leagues from Jorullo, situated on a plateau, 1400 metres higher than the volcano.

"Thousands of small cones, from 6 to 10 feet high, termed by the natives hornitos, (little stoves), cover the rounded surface of Malpais. In the midst of these little cones on a rent from south-south-west, to north-north-east, six mountains were heaved up above the original level of the plain, each being from 400 to 500 metres high. The loftiest is the volcano of Jorullo; it is still in operation, and on the north side has discharged an infinite mass of scoriated basaltic lava, containing fragments of primitive rock.

"The chief eruptions lasted till 1760, when they became rarer. The Indians, who in their terror at the fearful rumblings of the new volcano, had quitted their villages for six or eight leagues round, gradually accustomed themselves to the awful spectacle. They returned to their huts, and ventured to descend from the mountains

of Aguascarco and Santa Inés, in order to admire the magnificent fiery fountains, cast up through numerous larger and smaller openings. On this occasion the ashes covered the roofs of Queretaro, 48 leagues from the volcano in a straight line."

Forty four years after Humboldt had visited the volcanoes, the subterranean fire was less active, and vegetation appeared on all sides; nevertheless the thermometer rose in the shade to 43° C. Persons well acquainted with the fact, affirm, that for several years after the eruption the heat was insufferable, and the vast plain therefore uninhabited. To the present day the traveller is shewn the beds of Cuitimba and San Pedro, whose crystal waters once fertilised the estate of Don Andres Pimentel. In the fatal night of the 29th September the sources were dried up, but 3000 paces further to the west, in the raised district, two brooks now burst forth from the calcareous cones of the "hornitos" as hot springs, their temperature being about 50° C. Far below the surface the sound of a great mass of water is heard flowing from east to west, and near the hacienda "Presentacion" runs a brook, 14 to 18 feet wide, developing an extraordinary quantity of sulphurated hydrogen gas.

According to the latest measurements, the absolute height of this volcano is 4004 feet, the elevation above the plain 1223 feet. The cone is very steep, with a slope of 45°. The principal crater is on a great cleft; and it has several smaller craters; the temperature of the exhalations is now from 45 to 55° C., that of the sides and clefts much higher. In the crater, there are everywhere deposits of pure sulphur of every gradation of colour, from scarlet to pale yellow. The temperature of the atmosphere in the raised plain, which Humboldt found to be 43°, is now only 24° in the shade.

The list of active volcanoes ends with Colima, which was formerly deemed extinct, but of late years exhibited several eruptions, casting forth ashes only, and discharging mud.

The whole succession of volcanic mountains in Mexico, from Tustla on the Gulf, to Colima, traverses the mountain-range at right angles, and all seem to stand on a great rent or cleft in the firm crust of the earth; even Jorullo, the most recent in its origin, exhibits a cleft far down in the crater, at a right angle with the mountains. Frequent observations have shewn that, for the last twenty years the earthquakes were most severely felt in the volcanic line, and that the shocks were more from east to west, or *vice versa*. They were also remarked on the whole line from the South Sea to the Atlantic, with a variation of but few minutes, and decreased in severity towards the north and south, so that, whilst they cast down buildings, or rent the earth on the chief line, the shocks were scarcely felt at a distance of a few miles on either side.

Of the many earthquakes I have experienced there, one in particular is impressed on my recollection, which I observed between the volcanoes of Toluca and Popocatepetl. It was on a hot summer's afternoon; I was sitting with my friend St. . . before a miner's hut, on a hill affording an uninterrupted view of the plain towards Toluca. The air was sultry, and the calm atmosphere filled with a greyish

violet vapour. Suddenly a low rumbling, like thunder, was heard, proceeding, as it were, from the depths of Toluca, which seemed to approach with an undulating motion. We started up, and gazed anxiously in the direction of the phenomenon. The trees in the plain and on the mountains, rocked as though on the point of being uprooted; our horses, which were tied up at a short distance from us, snorted and reared; the ground trembled, the beams of the house creaked, and the shingles of the roofs rattled as in a mill-work. The people rushed out of their dwellings, fell on their knees, and sang: "Santo Dios, santo fuerte, santo imortal, libra nos Sennor de todo mal." All this was the appearance of a few moments. The subterranean thunder had subsided eastwards, before we well knew what had happened. The agitated appearance of the people, and the trembling of the horses alone assured us that the mighty spirit of earth had shaken the foundations of his abode.

Never shall I forget the impression made on me by an earthquake in the profound depths of a mine. The awful roll of the thunder seemed to issue from the rocks on every side, the solid mountain reeled, stones fell here and there, and amidst all was heard the hymn of the miners resounding from the pits and galleries. The shock lasted about 10 seconds, and after a slight pause, was repeated; but was of shorter duration. In both cases no misfortune happened. Mexico, however, does not always escape with such impunity; for only a year or two ago several buildings were destroyed in the capital, and many injured. The shock was very severely felt on the whole volcanic line, and moreover almost at the same instant from one sea to the other.

IX.

THE CHASMS (BARRANCAS), CAVES, WATERFALLS.

Amongst the peculiarities of Mexico, are the deep, almost perpendicular rents, those wonderful chasms, which are so frequent in all parts of the country. The greater part are met with between the mountains and the sea; but even on the table-land they are not uncommon. A great part of the east coast is so rent by chasms, mostly directing their course from east to west, that one can scarcely travel a league from south to north, without finding the road interrupted by these perpendicular abysses. Many of these chasms may have been formed when the country was convulsed by plutonic agency, and the horizontal deposits of the conglomerate would seem to bear out this opinion; others, on the contrary are clearly volcanic hollows; whilst others are doubtless produced by the resistless force of the mountain-torrents.

The number of the barrancas is so extraordinary, that their appearance and size must of necessity be very different. They are frequently narrow clefts, scarcely 100 feet wide, with bare perpendicular rocky walls, more than 1000 feet in height; often they are of immense width, gradually narrowing towards the bottom, but so that the valley is still of considerable extent; nevertheless they are always distinguished by perpendicular sides, though by giving way they have often different stories or terraces. Sometimes several chasms communicate, and where at the junction an acute angle is formed, grotesque, and highly picturesque masses of rock appear. Foaming torrents almost invariably hurry through these ravines, plunging from rock to rock, sometimes as a noisy cascade, sometimes as a roaring cataract. The humidity brings forth the most beautiful vegetation: tall and dense forests cover the bottom of the chasms; in the larger ones, only, have they made way for agriculture; shrubs and creeping plants start up from every crevice, on the loftier ridges and projections we find the cactus, agave, and cycas, or in the calcareous mountains different sorts of fan-palms, cereous and other pulpy plants. In the rainy season the bare rock is quite covered with lichens and moss, and presents the most charming play of colours, black and silvery, dark-green, yellow and scarlet, with all the different gradation of tints lying between.

In the rainy season, too, after the heavy tropical storms, the waters of the chasms roar like thunder, carrying with them huge blocks of stone; frequently vast walls of rock are loosened, and plunge with a tremendous noise, crushing the primitive forests like blades of grass; on all sides cascades are seen like threads of silver, or streaks of mist, in which rainbows are formed. The landscape painter finds a profusion of subjects for the most brilliant representations, whether he prefer the wildly romantic or the idyllic. But he rarely finds a beaten path, being forced to struggle through a thousand difficulties to reach the beautiful points; as neither guide-book nor cicerone can afford him assistance. Perhaps one of our readers may extend his wanderings to these regions, and be desirous of beholding some of these waterfalls, of which there are an incredible number in the country, without going far out of his way: near Jalapa he can see the torrents of Maulinco and Jilotepec, the cascades near Teocelo, and in the Barranca de la Junta. Near Huatusco are some beautiful waterfalls, and not far from Orizava the falls of the Rio Blanco into Rincon Grande, and Tuspango. The cataract of Regla, to the north of Mexico, has been frequently described and drawn, and is one of the most remarkable for its superb basin of dolerite pillars; but if sought for, more imposing ones may be found, surrounded by beautiful vegetation, in almost every river flowing from the mountains towards the sea. For nearly all the streams rising in the highlands, which is the case with most of them, have in their course of a few leagues to descend several thousand feet, and in the lower plains alone, near the coast, is it possible for them to flow tranquilly. The same is met with in all mountainous countries; in the Alps, the Aar and Reuss plunge in a thousand cascades towards the plain, as in Mexico the Panuco or Zacatula.

These chasms interfere sadly with the communication in the interior, but only on the slopes towards the two seas, and in a direction parallel with the coast. From the mountains to the sea, for instance, we meet with carriage roads, whilst it is morally impossible to travel a league in a straight line from north to south. These chasms are frequently inaccessible for a distance of many leagues, and having gone far out of the road before a passage can be effected, long use, and confidence in the sure-footedness of the mules and horses are requisite, to enable one to ride down these neck-breaking, winding rocky paths, without becoming giddy, especially as they are often only two or three feet in width, and on the brink of fearful precipices.

It has frequently happened, that newly arrived Europeans have accompanied me on such paths. As it never occurred to me that there was any danger, I rode on ahead, without inviting them to dismount. Pale and silent, resigned to their fate, they gave their beasts the reins, until a broader terrace permitted a halt, when I was usually forced to listen to some such speech as the following: "Man, what were you thinking of, to expose your fellow-creature (perhaps a hundred times worthier than yourself) so unscrupulously to such imminent peril! Do you not consider that I have a wife and family, that my life is of more value to me, than yours appears to be to you; if my wife, or my mother were to know of it! etc." The substance of the customary answer is: "Friend, the affair is not so dreadful as it seems; only a little practice, and the danger is quite forgotten; advance boldly, wherever a possibility offers, and you will again arrive at the broad every-day road, unless you break your neck by the way, etc." Four weeks later, you may wager that the opposition member wonders how he could lately have been so anxious.

You will ask: Why are bridges not thrown across these chasms? It would be impossible, even with a capital as large as England's national debt; much would be gained if only some of the main thoroughfares were rendered partly available. Here and there Nature has constructed bridges of most singular architecture. Thus near the village of Moliajaque, a natural bridge, called "puente de Dios (God's bridge)" crosses the river Atoyac, which flows through the valley of Puebla, and is here pent in a narrow ravine. The banks on either side are calcareous rock, which detaches itself in large slabs. Both shores were probably shaken by an earthquake: immense masses of rock were loosened on both sides, which approaching each other, formed an obtuse angle in the air, the banks serving as buttresses. The strangest circumstance is, that the same phenomenon occurs twice at the same spot, moreover directly above each other, so that one pointed arch is formed about 30 feet above the other. This bridge lies about three miles to the south-east of Puebla, and is not the only one in the country; I, at least, have seen two more, and have been told of several others.

Many deep narrow clefts are bridged over by felling a large tree on the brink, so that it connects both sides. Of course they can only be passed on foot, and persons who are giddy must sit astride on them, and work their way across. Still more aerial are the so-called Maromas, or hanging-bridges of the Indians. They are met

with, where the chasms are not above 30 to 50 feet wide, and where for many leagues no other passage can be found. A tree on each brink, serves as a pier, round which are strong cords made of the fibres of the agave, so that they represent two parallel ropes stretching across; these are bound and strengthened with creeping-plants, and short pieces of wood or bamboo-staves fastened horizontally, on which one may walk. Another rope is then stretched across, a few feet higher than this shaky bridge, to serve as a balustrade. Foot-passengers alone can avail themselves of this passage. Some are also constructed of sufficient width for the conveyance of luggage, usually at the spots where a path conducts to a stream, too broad or rapid for laden mules to pass. The baggage and saddle are then carried over the bridge, whilst the animals swim across.

A strange way of passing over some of the steep and narrow chasms, but which are furnished with paths to a certain depth, is a long rope, attached to a higher-standing overhanging tree. One sits on a stick at the end of the rope, and pulls one's self across to the other side by means of a creeping-plant stretched across; a complete flying bridge. On the west coast, a strong cable is stretched across some of the rivers, high above the surface of the water, with a large basket attached, in which the traveller sits or stands. By means of a rope the basket is drawn over to the other side. For many persons it is an anxious moment, whilst passing thus over the raging waters of the torrent, their lives depending merely on the strength of the fibres of a single rope.

In many Barrancas the river is too broad and deep for the passage to be effected in any of the above-mentioned ways; a ferry is then fixed upon, and as they are met with on nearly all the rivers of the plain, I give a description of them. Boats are seldom found, and their application is as usual. The 'balsas' or rafts are the customary Indian passage-boats, which all travellers must employ. In the state of Vera Cruz there are two kinds; either little rafts of very light wood which are drawn across the river by means of a rope stretched from one side to the other; or a long rope being attached to the raft, several naked Indians jump into the water, one of whom, with the end of the rope in his mouth swims to the opposite bank and then pulls, whilst the others swimming after the raft, push it forward and direct its course. These rafts are so small, that not more than two persons can stand on them; the baggage is conveyed across separately, and finally the horses must swim over, one horse being attached to a rope, and drawn after the raft, so that the others may follow. If the rivers are swollen, the passage is not without danger, and the stream often carries away the horses.

On the west coast the 'balsas' are of bamboo-staves, at the utmost ten feet square, a mere hurdle, beneath which some dozen bottle-gourds are fixed. The traveller entrusts himself upon it, and four swimming Indians urge the machine across the river. For a large party, encumbered with much luggage, this mode of effecting a passage is extremely tedious, and often attended with loss.

In some districts, I saw the Indians cross the river in a comical manner. Their village was on one bank, their fields on the other; men and women came down to the stream with a piece of wood as light as cork, four feet long, and six inches thick; having undressed, they made of their clothes, their food and hoe, a little bundle, which was held in the left hand above the water, whilst they rested with the left side on the wood, which was fastened round their necks by a string, paddling at the same time with the right hand. Old and young performed this operation with great dexterity, and so rapidly that one had scarcely time to observe that they had divested themselves of their clothing.

In the most tremendous chasms the little plantations of the Indians are frequently found, with their bananas and kitchen-gardens in the midst of a dense growth of forest-trees, in spots, apparently quite inaccessible. Laden with fruits, these people clamber like goats; or the women, with an infant at the breast, and a bigger child on their backs, ascend the steepest paths, scarcely twelve inches broad, The roots of the *seiba* (ficus mexicana) which force themselves into the clefts like monstrous snakes, often serve them as a ladder, or projecting points of basalt answer the purpose of steps on the steep face of lofty rocks. The Indian likes the dangers and the solitude of the chasms; a cave affords him shelter, and he fears neither the jaguar, prowling about in the night, nor the swarms of monkeys that plunder his fruit. In a future chapter I shall call attention to these people, and will only observe here, that they make use of the solitude of the chasms, secretly to practise many remains of their heathen rites, for which purpose the numerous caves here met with are very serviceable.

I shall not attempt to describe the remarkable caves and grottoes; many of them I have seen, and yet only a small part of those which exist; not even all on my own property. The caves of Cacahuamilpa in the state of Mexico, to the south-west of Toluca, are very renowned. A tolerably large torrent, flowing in a profound chasm, is suddenly opposed by a mountain-range of secondary lime, and has forced a passage underneath, three leagues in length. On the opposite side, it issues from the mouth of a great cave, but nobody is acquainted with the interior. Where the river enters the mountain, some feet above the surface of the water, is the entrance to a second mighty cavern, which in days of yore may have been the bed of the stream. The most beautiful stalactites are found in it, representing lofty domes, pillars, organs, and other fantastic shapes, countless passages and labyrinths so that no visitor has ever reached the end. There are no remains of antediluvian animals in the cavern.

In the district of Cuernavaca deep caves are seen in the calcareous mountains, on which the beautiful ruins of Sotschicalco repose. When treating of the Indian monuments, I shall again refer to them. Near Tasco there is a cavern in the volcanic rock, from which a large brook formerly issued. It was suddenly dried up after an earthquake, and burst forth again in the form of a bubbling fountain, six leagues further off. In this part of the mountains are many caves, the chasms,

in particular, exhibit them in abundance, and in many places they serve in the rainy season as a pen for the cattle, and as milking-places for the herdsmen. On the plateaus, however, the chasms and caves are less frequent, the vast table-land presents few obstacles, and the intercourse of the natives is checked merely by low ranges of hills, or smaller clefts, over which roads have been constructed with little difficulty.

Whoever visits the mountainous districts of Mexico, will meet with much that is interesting and beautiful in the 'barrancas', whether he roam the country as an artist or as a naturalist. Let him, however, be cautious how he descends into the chasms; in the close brushwood, one often imagines one's self at the bottom of the valley, when suddenly a stone rolling down, warns us that we are on the brink of a perpendicular wall of rock, and one false step would ensure inevitable destruction. More than once, a strange plant, or the hope of enjoying a fine view, has enticed me to the summit of a rock, whence there was no possibility of advance, and most hazardous to return. On one occasion I owed my life to nought save the toughness of a creeper, from which, at a dizzy height I hung suspended in mid-air. Indian hunters should be preferred as guides; they know every path, and glide through the thicket with the skill and celerity of the wild animals. One must also beware of descending into unknown chasms towards evening; the sun not only there disappears sooner, but the tropical twilight is so short, that half an hour after sunset it is quite dark. In the rainy season more especially the rapidly increasing mountain-torrents are to be feared; after a storm little gullies become raging torrents, capable of bearing off horse and rider.

During the dry season many of the chasms have no trace of water, whilst in the rainy season devastating floods hurry through them. An English mining-company made bitter experience of this fact. In a tolerably wide chasm, they had erected their huts and store-houses, when in one tropical stormy night, all their labours were completely swept away. Some months afterwards I remarked in the branches of the trees in the dry bed of the stream, various remnants of their mining-tools.

X.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY.

In the preceding sketches I have endeavoured to afford some descriptions of the surface of the country, less calculated perhaps to interest the general reader, than the friends of natural science. My intention was to offer a view of the soil, on which the various groups of population are met with, in order that the reader might picture

to himself the surrounding landscape, when I proceeded to describe the social relations. When the plateaus are referred to, he knows that tropical forests, and sugar-plantations are there not to be sought for; when speaking of the coast-regions, that corn-fields and pines are wanting.

This would be the fitting place to mention the most remarkable appearances of the animal kingdom; I must, however, reserve it for another chapter, and here venture only to observe that we must beware of attaching credit to all that modern works inform us of the zoological relations of Mexico. The otherwise carefully written work of Mühlenpfordt's, for instance, is quite incorrect in the zoological department; Tümmel's book "Mexico and the Mexicans" tells us fables of monstrous apes, which are clearly the offspring of the disturbed dreams of an ignorant settler, who had plied his rum-bottle somewhat too hard. Old Dr. Hernandez, who describes the animals of Mexico in the sixteenth century, is a more trustworthy authority that many of his successors; and though the learned Professor Lichtenstein of Berlin, in an academical treatise, considers many of the animals fabulous described by Hernandez, the old author was right, and the animals exist.

This short digression brings me to the biped creations of Mexico, usually known by the generic name of 'man'. According to the Mexican terminology, they are divided into two kinds, the reasonable and the unreasonable (gente de razon y gente sin razon), and although these two species are to be found in all quarters of the globe, and in every climate, the latter predominating, the Spaniard has his own ideas on the subject, and considers the men of his peculiar race alone endowed with reason, the red-skins being denied it. The definition, however, is not extended to all the dark skinned race, but specially to the full-blood Indians; for those of mixed race, though able perhaps to claim but the most distant relationship to the whites, also pretend to some modicum of reason, and are more pertinaciously opposed to the Indians than the whitest of the whites.

The law knows no distinction of the kind; the constitution has placed all the citizens of the country, whatever their colour, on an equal footing, all privileges of birth are withdrawn, and slavery long since eradicated. Customs, however, which have taken root amongst the people, and are perpetuated by the language, cannot so easily be obliterated by law; consequently we find here an aristocracy of colour, as in European republics or monarchies, an aristocracy of birth. It is precisely the same thing. There and here we talk of blood, of noble race; in the east, as in the west, unequal marriages disturb the repose of families; and we must not be surprised if a white Mexican 'proletarian', of pure and noble descent, on his daughter confessing her ardent affection for a brown youth of mixed race, and asking his consent to their union, bursts into a terrible passion, and exclaims: "Accursed child of Satan! how canst thou thus dishonour thy parents, and desire to sully thy pure race with a colour which would disgrace it for ever! Rather would I see thee in thy coffin, than a brown bantling in thy arms, etc." It is sad to remark

such absurd prejudices; but for the observer of popular customs, even excrescences such as these are of interest.

If we desire to obtain a glance at the different elements of which the people are composed, we mix with the varying crowd in the market-place, or in the bustle of a popular festival, when all are found united. Accompany me, gentle reader, to the capital of the country, and let us criticise the various figures here assembled at the market. A large building surrounds the place on all four sides; on two sides there are countless booths, where chiefly Europeans, and Creoles of Caucasian race offer their wares. There is no mistaking the Spanish type, for of the Europeans in Mexico, it is exclusively the Spaniard who occupies himself with retail business. In the Creoles we recognize the features of the Spaniard of the south, the conquerors and the first colonists having been mostly Andalusians; they are Arabian physiognomies, not very full, with dark eyes, thick black beards and hair. The man there, in the close-fitting talar, and the broad-brimmed hat, cocked on either side, is also of the Creole race; he is a canon or prebendary, who, here and there saluting, attends the provision-market for gastronomical purposes. Those monks, too, with the brown-skinned lay-brothers, select for their refectory the best the market can afford, at the same time darting amorous glances at the kitchen-maids who accompany that bandy-legged steward of some rich man. The centre of the square, or the space enclosed by the four wings of the great market-buildings, is occupied by long rows of dealers in vegetables, fruit, flowers, poultry etc., and every morning crowds of persons of all classes throng the passages of this bazaar. The officer and the official, the flourishing artificer, the wholesale dealer with his clerk, the lawyer, the landed proprietor are mostly whites, and are distinguished by their dress and bearing from the other elements of the population.

The greatest contrast is offered by the negro, or a tawny mulatto, perhaps the cook of a Havannese, or of a native of the coast. Few such are seen, however, in the towns of the plateaus, it being too cold for the African race, who are designed by Nature for a scorching climate. The majority of the market-population are the reddish-brown people, of every shade of colour, from the copper-coloured Indian to the mestins, who differ but little from the whites. Strange sights are seen amongst the so-called coloured population. The male and female Indian squat on the ground near their fruit and vegetables, which are placed in layers on a mat, and cry their wares most discordantly. 'Atole' and 'tortillas (boiled maize and maize-bread)' are offered by the Indian women, who fail not with their soft voices to announce their merits. Round them are assembled the muleteer, clad wholly in leather, the soldier from the neighbouring barracks, and the labourer, all of the mestins class, to take their breakfast. Here roasted wild ducks are lauded, there a ragout of pork with Spanish pepper, whilst the Indian praises his pulque, or we are invited to drink lemonade, chia-water, and other refreshments in coloured glasses, at a table prettily ornamented with flowers. Here we find the sunburnt ranchero, the peasant and herdsman with his wife and daughter, or perhaps his

C. M. Kurz sculp.

CITIZENS AND MARKET-FOLKS.

PLACEROS Y RANCHEROS. (MEXICO.) *BÜRGER UND MARKTLEUTE.*

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sweetheart; *he*, spurred, a whip in his hand, and the showy 'sarape' picturesquely flung over his shoulder like the toga, *she*, with a broad-brimmed felt-hat, or with a blue handkerchief round her head to keep off the sun. A brown, barefooted fellow has a tray before him, on which are little wax figures representing popular subjects, whilst another offers lottery tickets for sale, and promises luck for the drawing which is to take place in the evening; a third recommends a political pamphlet as the newest and most important thing of the kind. In all the public places of the Mexican towns, we always meet with the 'leperos' or lazaroni. They are found at every corner with a rope and porter's knot, offering their services as porters; they officiate also as day-labourers, scavengers, hawkers, their number is increased by peripatetic cobblers, cock-fighters, conjurors, and above all by the honourable guild of cheats, swindlers, and pickpockets. The rascals are so original in their frivolity, that I must afterwards devote a separate chapter to them.

Among the singular market-figures under the arcades are the so-called evan gelists, strange, meager old fellows, usually in dark trowsers, and black round jackets. They are seated on a low stool or a step, with a board on their knees, writing. Some servant-girls are whispering their confessions in the ear of one of them, their hands repose confidentially on his shoulder, whilst he raises his bushy brows, and extends his leather-coloured physiognomy, his old fashioned spectacles, clinging to his nose alone, and moving up and down on the crooked bridge. Now he nods to signify that he has comprehended what is required of him, and begins to write; his penitents waiting quietly, or hurriedly communicating further wishes. An 'arriero (donkey-driver)' stands near another, scratching his poll, making piecemeal confessions only to his severe examiner, who regards him most suspiciously. The evangelists are the public scribes, who compose love-letters in prose or verse, birth-day congratulations, invitations to stand godfather or godmother, or letters of condolence, etc., all in the most approved form. According to order the caligraphy is plain or ornamental, with marginal drawings, such as turtle-doves surrounded with foliage, burning hearts, or hearts transfixed with arrows, roses, or weeping willows. One should listen occasionally; and most edifying histories may be heard. The evangelist also carries on a petty traffic with ink, ready-made pens, and fancy-paper for billets-doux; scandal indeed affirms that they are also procurers; but this is probably the offspring of professional envy, and it is to be presumed that they would not thus lower their evangelical dignity.*

The Mexican population presents the most striking contrasts, unlike that of any city of north-western Europe. On one side splendour and luxury, elegant carriages, and Parisian toilette, on the other dirt and indigence, an exclusive life, with a separate national type in its outward appearance, in language and manners. The different figures presented to us at the market, comprise a leaf of the history of

* These public scribes are not to be confounded with those met with in Rome and Constantinople, with the 'escribanos publicos', or notaries public, who undertake the so-called voluntary jurisdiction.

the country, a sad one, as with so many nations. The dusky Indian ruled here, and boasted a mighty empire; the superior intelligence of the Europeans conquered it, and rendered the freemen slaves. The severe tasks imposed on them, carried off thousands, and to save them from extirpation, the black African was introduced. Three centuries passed, during which the Indian still existed, having been and remaining a tiller of the land, without being compelled to enter upon a new phase of existence, which would have embittered his days, like the North American hunter, who pined in cities, and fretted himself to death like the lion in his cage.

When Cortes with his daring band conquered Mexico, the dominant race was that of the Aztecs, who coming as invaders from the north, had subjected the peaceful agricultural nation, and enriched with immense booty, had adopted the customs of those they had overthrown. The noblest of the Aztecs fell in the struggle with the Spaniards, their property passed into the hands of the victors, who, at the same time became possessed of the families of those who had fallen; the rude warriors were pleased with their acquisition, and married the dusky daughters of the country, who were rendered their equals, by baptism. Cortes himself married the beautiful Marina or Matintzin. Can we therefore be surprised if his comrades, and the numerous adventurers, whom the fame of Mexico's treasures attracted thither from Europe after the conquest, sought to obtain wealth and landed estates by espousing a noble Aztec girl? At the time no one considered this a mis-alliance, in the first decenniums the expression Mestizzo or Mestins was unknown, and the noble families of the Aztecs, were regarded as nobles of Spain. The sons of Montezuma, who were educated in Spain, received the title of Count; and many originally Indian families in Mexico, existing even at the present day, for example: Schikotenkal, Chimalpopoca, Ixtlisutschil etc., were invariably equally respected with the Spaniards. We must therefore conclude, that the Indian aristocracy either fell in battle with the Spaniards, or deemed it advisable to join them, and thus secure their material interests. They adopted Christianity, and became amalgamated with the new population.

It was not so with the poorer class, who from the earliest periods had been subjected to the Indian aristocracy, and at the conquest only changed masters. They were not regarded by the Spaniards as equals, and though not slaves, they were considered minors, even by law, and consequently the pariahs of society. Nevertheless countless mongrels were born, some in lawful matrimony, some 'per nefas'; and during three centuries the priest and the monk, the soldier and the young Creole have continued to graft the Caucasian stock on the wild trunk. Thus arose the numerous Mestins population, which has inherited in part the brown hue of the mother, but also the greater energy and more vigorous mind of the father. The gradations of colour are naturally determined by the degree of relationship, the union of the Mestins with the whites giving rise to a lighter, that with the Indians to a darker hue.

The African race, which is but slightly represented in Mexico, has such very marked characteristics, that it may be recognized in spite of every intermarriage,

by the woolly hair, thick lips, and broad compressed nose. From the union of a negro with an Indian female, or of a Mulatto with a negress, arise those dark-brown Mestins, known on the west coast by the appellation Zambos; in general, however, the different degrees of colour are not taken into consideration, as was the case when slavery still existed, and as it still is in the West Indies and North America. Mexico, in fact, never had many slaves, and these only in the torrid regions on the coast. In the higher districts, where there was no want of hands, the conviction had long since been arrived at, that the labour of freemen was cheaper than that of slaves. In the time of the Spanish dominion, a proprietor named Yermo, a native of Biscay, who cultivated several large sugar-plantations with the assistance of slaves, made the calculation that free labour would cost him less; he assembled therefore his negroes, and offered them their liberty, on condition of their remaining on the estate, and taking service under him as free labourers. The blacks accepted the offer with the greatest delight, but they soon found out that they must work harder than before, that they must now provide themselves with lodging, clothing, and food. After a few weeks, they begged their master to receive them again as slaves! Of course he was not able to do so, as they had been legally manumitted; they remained therefore free labourers. On these estates the African type may be recognized even to the present day, though it is disappearing more and more by intermarriage.

When in 1810 the Creole population rose against the Spanish rule, abolition of slavery was proclaimed in one of the first paragraphs, and as soon as they had attained complete independence, it was determined by the Constitution, that slavery should not be permitted within the bounds of the republic, that every slave should be free, as soon as he touched Mexican ground.

In time the black race will disappear altogether, and would have been obliterated already, if free negroes, mostly artificers, had not emigrated from Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies, and settled in the sea-ports. Though their number be small, it is still sufficient to keep up this part of the population. In a legal point of view, they are on an equality with every other citizen.

The varied groups of the Mexican population, have something highly original, and form an excellent relief to the landscape; particularly the Creole in the country, and the Mestins, who as horsemen, are quite equal to the Arabs, and gallop about the far-extending plateaus. Saddle and bridle have something antique in their appearance, as though dating from the time of Cortes. It looks well, however, is quite practical for the country, and convenient for horse and rider. The latter is as firm in the saddle as though he were glued to it, and his motions are as easy and safe as though he were exhibiting his skill in the circus. A broad-brimmed hat, with a coloured riband round the short head, shades the brown bearded face; the shirt-collar is turned back very far, and kept together by a carelessly tied, bright silk handkerchief. His upper garment is a short jacket, often of brown or black deerskin ornamented with a number of silver buttons. The trowsers of deerskin,

or cloth beset with leather, are fastened with a bright silk girdle *(banda)*, wound three or four times round the body; down the sides are many buttons, but they are closed only to the knees, so as to fall over the peculiar leggings, which are fastened under the knee, and consist of large pieces of pressed deerskin, twisted twice round the lower part of the thigh. The foot is protected by leathern half-boots, on which the large jingling spurs, whose sharp rowels are often two inches in diameter, are fastened with straps.

The horseman is never without his cloak, in rain or sunshine, be it the parti-coloured 'sarape', or the sober 'manga'. Both are pieces of woollen stuff, two fathoms long by one broad, furnished in the middle with an opening longways (this slit which is two feet in length, is usually trimmed with velvet, several inches broad, and bordered with gold and silver fringe), through which in rainy weather the head is thrust, the cloth thus covering the whole body. In good weather the cloak is merely flung over the shoulder; but without it no Mexican leaves home, on horseback or on foot; it is a mark of his dignity, the toga, which accompanies him to market, and to church, and which is only laid aside at home, or when at work.

In the towns the younger Creole, belonging to the educated classes, is dressed in the European style. The desire to play the dandy is unmistakeable in the young people; whilst the old Creole, as well as the Spaniard, never quits his dwelling without his long dark cloth cloak *(capa)*, even though the sun be in the zenith.

The Indian invariably retains his national dress, which is as simple as the whole mode of life of these children of nature. The man wears short, wide drawers of coarse cotton, or brown deerskin, which seldom reach to the knee, and a sort of frock of coarse woollen cloth, fastened round his hips with a belt. A little straw hat and sandals complete his dress, which is devoid of all ornament. The females wrap themselves in a piece of woollen stuff, that passes twice round the body, but is not closed with a seam; this is girded round the waist with a broad, coloured band, so that it forms a sort of gown, reaching to the unshod feet. The upper part of the body is covered with the 'huipile' a wide garment, closed on all sides, reaching to the knee, and furnished with two openings for the arms. The hair, tied up with a bright riband, is either wound about the head in a thick roll, or hangs down in two plaits. Large earrings and bead necklaces complete the toilette. The Indians distinguish their tribes by the colour and fashion of their simple clothing, like the Scotch Highlanders. Wearing shoes is considered by them a departure from the good old fashion.

So much for the outward appearance of the popular groups, as they present themselves at the first glance. The description of the life and manners of the separate classes of the population will afford these slight outlines colouring and shade.

XI.

THE CREOLES.

The word Creole (criollo) means in general "native", and is employed thus in Mexico; in a more limited sense, the meaning: native of white or European descent, is attached to it. We are about to make acquaintance with the Creoles in the latter signification.

The white Mexicans represent the intelligence of the country, and may therefore be regarded as the nobility and gentry. The Creoles constitute a seventh part of the population, about 1,200,000. In outward appearance they approach the Spaniards; and yet a peculiar type is unmistakeable. Men and women are seldom above the middle height, of slender growth, with dark hair, lively dark eyes, and little hands and feet. We find many faces of an oriental cast, with the curved nose and fine mouth. The complexion usually is not very fresh, especially in the warmer districts; in the colder parts, however, rosy cheeks, and even fair hair are not uncommon. Both sexes soon arrive at maturity; the young man is completely developed at seventeen, the girl at fourteen. The Creole is very animated; he learns with facility, is of active habits, a graceful dancer, a skilful horseman, but not very muscular, and unfit for a continuance of heavy labour. His speech is quick, and accompanied with most animated gestures. This, though a peculiarity of all southern nations, is specially cultivated by the Mexicans; and the northman, who hardly accompanies his speech with more than a slight movement of the hand, wonders at the thousand motions which as dumb show sometimes award more emphasis to what is said, sometimes serve as a commentary.

If, for instance, I desire to indicate the height of an object with my hand, for inanimate things I employ the horizontal position of the whole hand, for an animal, the upright position of the whole hand, for a human being, the raised forefinger. If I beckon some one to approach, I move the palm towards my body in a descending curve; the contrary motion, from the body, means: "Go away!" If I move the hand vertically downwards, the meaning is: "Stand still." The language of a people is not thoroughly understood, unless their looks and gestures are also comprehended; but it requires long practice to render one's self acquainted with this dumb show, especially if the parties are desirous that it should not be understood, as with the telegraphic communications of lovers, etc.

In general the Creole is passionate and easily moved; but he is able to govern his emotions. His warm blood often runs off with his head; anger, love, or jealousy drive him to inconsiderate actions; but he is soon restored to his usual equanimity. Treachery is foreign to him; he seeks not to revenge himself by hired bandits, as in Italy or Portugal. Though we are informed by many tourists, that when offended

he sheathes his knife in the breast of his opponent, and though this frequently happens in the lower classes, it is never the result of deliberation, but an act of extreme passion, and commonly a sort of duel with short weapons. With the Creoles it rarely occurs, but more with the Mestins, and I shall again have occasion to refer to it.

The Creole, even though uneducated, has a degree of natural refinement, a certain politeness and ease; he is ambitious and vain, and if the basis of sound instruction is wanting, which by the way is not very often found, he is presently discovered to be superficial. Vanity often leads him to esteem his own value too highly, not only personally, but also nationally. The war with North America has in this respect afforded him severe lessons, and convinced him that blustering speeches cannot make head against bold attacks.

Thoughtlesness and love of enjoyment characterize southern nations, and the Mexican Creole is no exception. True, he is exceedingly moderate in the use of spirituous liquors, drunkards being rare exceptions, neither does he practise gastronomy to the same extent as the northman, but he is fond of sweetmeats and confectionery. He is above all passionately attached to every kind of festive amusement, is a great admirer of the fair sex, and addicted to gaming. The love of gaming is common to all classes, the Indians excepted, and is the bane of whole families. Gaming-houses are found in towns and villages, where 'monte', a sort of faro, is played, and in which every one takes part. No laws, no police regulations have as yet succeeded in extirpating these hells, there being too many who do all in their power to promote them. On every festive occasion gaming renders itself prominent: at cock-fights and horse-races it is practised, even in the billiard-rooms and coffee-houses betting is constantly observed. Passionately devoted as the Mexican is to gaming, he bears his losses with stoical indifference. He loses large sums, his watch, his clothes, does not, however, shoot himself on that account, but hopes to win back his property the next evening. The ruin of countless individuals is the inevitable consequence of this wretched passion: it not only undermines the prosperity, but also the morality of families. Whilst the husband passes his nights at the green table, seduction enters his house; and with his property, peace of mind and domestic happiness vanish.

By no means do I venture to affirm that there are no exceptions to this vice; some of the men avoid play altogether, many take part in it occasionally only, and then with moderation; these, however, are the minority of the nation. Remarkable changes of fortune, are consequently more frequent than in other countries. Families dating from the old Spanish aristocracy, who, a quarter of a century ago, were still in possession of colossal fortunes, are completely ruined by gaming; the posterity of the Counts of Regla, Valle, and others are beggars, whilst their splendid estates are in the possession of young upstarts, who prefer mercantile speculations to the mad ventures of the green table.

The Creoles are not merely gamesters; but are passionately devoted to the sex. The dwellers in southern climates are unacquainted with the sentimental love of the northmen; he terms it poetical enthusiasm, and laughs at it. No difficulties, no barriers are insurmountable to him. If the electric spark ignites, and his passion is returned, opportunity will soon be found. Boldness, cunning and bribery must all be employed, and the endeavours are seldom fruitless. In England and Germany, public morality, and a general feeling of propriety serve in a great measure as the guardians of wives and daughters; in Mexico, however, the females are sadly in want of a good moral education, and are limited to the catechism, which is learnt, but not felt. The admonitions of mothers are for the most part preached to deaf ears, as example effects more than precept, and passion more than laws. The morality of the women is everywhere regulated by that of the men. No mother considers her daughter secure unless she be under her own eye; she never goes to church, or in company without her; and should it occasionally be requisite to devolve this care upon a relation, or a trusty servant, it is always done with repugnance; and quite naturally, for the mother knows well enough how, in her youth, she eluded the vigilance of her Argus.

These hints are, of course, to be taken in a very wide sense; intrigue does not enter every family; it is more frequent in the luxurious capital than in the country. Taken altogether the morals are more lax even than in Spain, and yet less corrupt than in the large cities of Europe.

The Creoles constitute the chief part of the population of the cities; they are government officials, physicians, lawyers, merchants, manufacturers, mining-proprietors, and artificers. The great landed proprietors, the country traders, and the higher orders of the clergy, also belong to this class.

They are not distinguished by any national costume, but usually wear the European dress, as prescribed by the mighty decrees of Parisian tailors and dress-makers. In the country, only, the round jacket is still used in the house, over which, when in the open air, and especially when they go to church, the Spanish cloth cloak, trimmed with lace, is thrown. The short jacket is also worn on horseback. Poor and rich are much given to fine and clean linen. In their toilettes, the ladies are guided more by the Paris 'Journal des Modes' than the men. The newest patterns in silk, woollen and cotton-stuffs are seen sooner in Mexico than in Russia; and the daughter of the official in the distant mountain village, decks herself with the showy productions of Lyons and Manchester, with the embroidery of St. Gall, and jewellery of Paris, just the same as the idlers at Baden-Baden. The female Creole, however, adheres to her morning-dress for the church, which is always black, with the graceful mantilla, trimmed with broad lace, attached to the back of the head and falling below the shoulders. In the country-towns and villages they go also in coloured dresses to church, but the silk mantilla is invariably thrown over the head. In the country, too, the uncomfortable restraint of stays is less usual than in the large towns. Silk stockings and light silk shoes protect

the little foot; the hand is provided with a fan, which is constantly in motion, and often serves to telegraph an interesting message across the street.

The wealthy Creole is a friend to luxury, he has showy equipages, beautiful saddle-horses, numerous servants, but no comfort in his house. In order to give an idea of the mode of living, I must describe the house itself. The plan of the house is as in ancient Rome, which the Spaniards have transplanted across the ocean, and which is adapted to the climate. From the street we enter through a great gate, beneath the archway of which is the porter's lodge, or the counting-house of the proprietor. We then arrive at a square yard, surrounded on all sides by a piazza; in the middle is usually a fountain, with flower-vases. The wide balustrade of the piazza is also mostly adorned with flowers. The doors of every room open on this fore-court. The chief apartment, the saloon, looks on the street, and is met with even in the villages, decorated with the best furniture, a looking-glass, corner-tables with flower-vases, the picture of a saint in a silver niche, or something else of the sort. One end of the saloon, the wall here having neither door nor window, is the seat of the ladies (estrado); it is frequently raised some inches, laid with carpets or mats, and furnished with low sofas. Numerous chairs are placed against the other walls. The saloon communicates either directly or through the corridor (piazza) with the other rooms, *viz.*, the bed-rooms (recameras), the dining-room, the kitchen etc. Opposite the entrance, a smaller gate usually conducts into the second yard, which is surrounded by the stable, coach-house, apartments for the men-servants etc. One-storied houses are mostly arranged in this manner; in large towns, the houses are generally two-storied, and frequently there is an 'entresol'. In this case the ground-floor is for warehouses, shops, or servants' rooms, whilst the family dwell in the first floor; the colonnade, however, is met with in the different stories, and the disposition of the apartments is in a great measure the same.

The ladies would perhaps like to take a peep behind the curtains; but I scarcely know if I may indulge them thus far without being deemed indiscreet. The thing must be duly considered, for the room is perhaps not yet in order, the bed not made etc., and ladies are apt to criticise their own sex very severely. A passing glance, nevertheless, may be permitted; but not too early in the morning, as the Mexican ladies are no friends to rising betimes. We will proceed to the house of a man, who has a tolerable income; there are many better, but also many worse; and therefore I make choice of one of a middling description. The floor of the whole house is paved with flags, carefully cemented. In the saloon and some of the rooms, the flags are painted so as to resemble mosaic. The walls are unpapered, plastered, and painted with arabesques; the ceiling is the same. The master's study or office, on the right, under the gateway, has a sufficiently smoky appearance, is full of bundles of deeds or acts (I believe he is a lawyer), whilst several clerks, with very subaltern faces, and important office-frowns, scribble away for their lives. The furniture is extremely simple, of course; but the adjoining cabinet,

where the licentiate (here called Doctor, the usual title of a lawyer) himself works, has a handsome writing-table, a glass-case with books, and a few arm-chairs.

Let us enter the colonnade to the left; the folding-doors of the saloon are open, nobody is within, so we can just look round. The seat of honour is laid with fine mats, over which is a carpet, about four feet wide, before the sofa, which extends right across the upper end of the oblong apartment. Corner tables of japanned pine-wood are adorned with flower-vases, behind which we have here a 'mater dolorosa', there an infant Christ in glazed niches. A modern sofa stands opposite the 'estrado'; several tables, and a few dozen chairs occupy the other walls. The windows reach to the ground, but are protected from without by iron bars, bent outwards, so that we can look on the street without inconvenience.

In an adjoining boudoir is some embroidery, a prayer-book, and one of Eugéne Sue's romances; a silver brazier with burning coals, and a bundle of paper cigars near it, indicate that the lady of the house is fond of smoking her 'cigarrito'. A half-opened door affords us a sight of the interior of a sleeping-apartment; a large bed stands against the wall, the head and foot of the bedstead are rounded off, and exhibits in oval panels, Adam and Eve, and the Landing of Noah's Ark, painted in oil. It seems to be an inviting place of repose, with a woollen damask counterpane, and pillows of embroidered muslin. A somewhat stout señora sits on the bed on a fringed tiger-skin, in the Turkish fashion (with her legs doubled up under her), enjoying a cup of chocolate, whilst a maid is seated before her on the ground, holding a silver plate, with a glass of water on it. The good lady has a cloth thrown over her head and shoulders; but the curious will not fail to remark that she wears no cap (invariably the case with the Creole ladies), but that her hair hangs down her back. Her morning-gown too is not plaited, but hangs about her much like a sack.

Merry peals of laughter in the next room lead us to the presumption that the young people are there. Sure enough tney are the daughters, but strange to say, not one has her dress closed; one has her arms out of the sleeves even, which are tied round her waist, like a sash. Their plaited hair hangs down their backs, the feet are encased in silk slippers, but the stockings are wanting. Of what use would they be in so mild a climate? The blue and white cotton wrappers are worn; but they conceal little. The young people gaily smoke their cigars, whilst one of them is seated on a mat on the ground having her long glossy hair combed by the maid. The room is not over tidy; the stockings lie about on the ground, on the bed are silk dresses, which are evidently for attending mass, on the chairs are crapes, and other articles of dress. There is no chest of drawers visible, but several boxes, standing against the wall on wooden tressles, replace the numerous cupboards etc., which in luxurious Europe are deemed indispensable in a lady's boudoir. The dressing-table is not well supplied with brushes, soaps, essences etc., but with a complete assortment of rings, earrings, bracelets, brooches, chains, and pins.

Let us listen to the girls a bit, and hear what they are talking about. "Oh! if you only knew, Doña Jesusita", whispers the maid, "what the handsome young gentleman with the black beard said to me to-day, when I fetched cigars for your mama; oh! he's quite distracted with love for you." — "Name him not, Felipa; he is faithless and ungrateful! Does he suppose the enamoured glances he cast at Carmelita escaped me, or how their eyes met?" — "A mere accident, miss; I swear he has eyes for you alone." — "Be silent, I say! You must not listen to him again in the street; do you hear? He must feel that I am angry with him. But what had he to say to you?" — "What! Lord help me! if I could only say it as beautifully as he said it, that he should never be happy, unless the saint he adored would listen to him, that he" — A noise in the corridor interrupts the confession; visitors have come, a lady with her daughter, intimate friends it seems; for they look first in the saloon, and finding it empty, go straight to the room of the lady of the house. Here the customary salutations are exchanged: "Good morning Doña Fulgenica, how have you passed the night? well? how glad I am. And you Doña Manuela? how have you slept? badly! I'm sorry for that; but you should have rested longer. You certainly come from church already." — "Oh! no we're on our way there. And your children, how are they?" — "All well! But sit down; would you not rather go into the saloon? Girls, do you hear, come directly, friends are here! Now, do take a seat, and let us smoke a cigar. Alas! I can offer you nothing good: since my Havannahs are gone, I can't find a cigar to my taste."

The daughters now make their appearance, with the shawl thrown over their heads and shoulders. The mode of salutation is an embrace; kissing is not in fashion, as in Europe, where it is often excessively annoying.

All sit down; the cigars which are held with small gold nippers, so as not to stain the fingers, send forth their little clouds, the conversation treats of the health, the church, the theatre, and dress; here there is a difference between the old and new world, for whilst in the latter they talk incessantly about the ball, in the former they exhaust themselves with complaints about the servants.

We will leave them thus occupied, and meanwhile glance at the domestic department. The laundress's room is open, there is linen on the table ready for ironing, the irons are being heated on large earthen chafing-dishes; but the motive power has just gone into the kitchen to smoke a cigar in company. There are the cook, two house-maids, the errand-girl, and the footman, pleasantly chatting and finding fault with their employers. A glass of sherry circulates, affording the party a slight morning restorative. It seems to issue from the bottle which the footman has just brought from his master's room to lock up in the pantry. They are joined by the water-carrier, a friend of the house, who has just brought the water for drinking, and is now taking breath. The man knows much, for he conveys water to houses of distinction, and hears at the fountain all the news of the town. Unfortunately it strikes twelve, and the visitors must attend the last mass; the kitchen-meeting is

therefore adjourned, and we may as well take the opportunity of making our escape at the same time.

It is a duty I owe to the ladies, to add a few words about the housekeeping of the Creoles. I have already remarked, that they are not very early risers. About 8 o'clock a small cup of chocolate with sweet bread is taken. The family do not assemble for this refreshment, but each person receives it in his bedroom. At 10 o'clock there is a hot breakfast of roast or stewed meat, eggs, and with all classes the never-failing dish of beans (frijoles), which are first boiled soft, and then fried with fat and onions. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon dinner is served, which has certain unvarying dishes. First a cup of clear broth, then 'sopa', of rice, paste, or some kind of bread-fruit, cooked in broth, till the fluid has completely evaporated, and highly seasoned with tomatas. The 'olla' is the third dish, and is met with on every table. It consists of beef, mutton, a little pork, ham, fowl, small sausages, cabbage, French beans, parsneps, turnips, pear, banana, onions, celery, a little coriander and parsley, all cooked together. The vegetables are placed on the table apart from the meat, and each person helps himself according to his taste. The 'olla' is followed by some 'principios', mostly ragouts with strong-flavoured broth of meat or fish; then comes a sweet dish, and finally some dried sweetmeats. Wine is rarely drunk at table: but the sweetmeats are succeeded by a large glass of water.

Most Creoles allow themselves a siesta after dinner. At 6 o'clock chocolate is drunk, or in hot weather, ice or fruit-jelly with water; a little walk, a ride or a drive is taken afterwards, and it is then time for the theatre and the 'tertullas'. The latter are the evening parties of the ladies, gentlemen being also frequently present. The guests sit round the saloon, which is wretchedly illuminated with two tallow candles. Here they smoke and chat. Sometimes there is music, or even a dance; refreshments are rarely offered, unless it be perhaps a few sweetmeats and water.

Supper is usually taken about 10 o'clock, consisting of roast meat, salad, beans, and a sweet dish. Immediately after supper, the family go to bed.

Invitations to dinner are seldom; if strange gentlemen only are invited, the ladies are frequently not present. The Mexican is hospitable, and it is a point of honour to entertain the guests well. The number of guests at country festivities, which are not unlike the feasts of the Homeric heroes, is often very great.

Domestic life is very different from that of the Germanic races. The life led by the ladies in their boudoirs savours somewhat of the Oriental; they work beautifully with the needle, weave and embroider, play and sing; the intellectual element, however, is wanting, the understanding and the heart are uncultivated, and sensuality therefore easily obtains the upper hand. The mistress of the house has few cares; no supply of provisions is laid up for the winter, and the washing is done every week. No provisions being stored up, the servants are not led into temptation, and the mistress has not the labour of measuring out the supply from day to day. The requisites for each meal are purchased in the booths (tiendas) by the cook or her satellites, just as they are wanted, for instance: meat, suet, spices, bread, etc.; the

vegetables are bought at the market every morning; and the coals are brought daily to the house by the coal-merchant, for everything is cooked at coal-fires.

The ladies have thus fewer household labours, and many of the present generation devote the time to improving themselves by reading. In company they are amiable and animated, and whatever European ladies may have to object to, it is certain that the gentlemen who are masters of their beautiful language, will invariably find their society attractive, and praise their charms.

It would be wrong to conclude these cursory glances at the life of the Creoles, without alluding to a prominent feature, which does them much honour. This is the respect paid by the children to their parents. The sons remain under parental authority, until they have established a family of their own, and even among the labouring classes, the son deposits his earnings in his father's hands, or at least makes no disposal of it, without his consent. A child never outrages his parents, or treats them with indifference; and this praiseworthy custom has been adopted even by the Mestins, being as strictly observed in the cottage as in the palace. From their tenderest youth upwards, the children when called by their parents, never ask: "What?" or, "What do you want?" but always: "What are your commands, Sir, or Madam?" When they speak of their absent parents, they employ either the confidential: "my papa, my mama!" or they say "Señor padre, Señora madre", or even "Su Merced" (his honour). The son never permits himself to smoke tobacco in the presence of his father, not even when full-grown, or married. The mother, who always sits at home with her daughters, is more indulgent in this respect, perhaps even encourages them to smoke: but in presence of their father, they never venture it. The son takes off his hat, when his father speaks with him; if seated, he rises on either of his parents entering the room, and offers his chair; he avoids turning his back to them, and does not even pass in front of them, if it be possible to pass any other way, and when compelled to do so, he invariably says: "Pardon me!" or, "With your permission."

In Mexico there are no orphan-asylums, but the orphans are nevertheless provided for. At the christening, the god-parents undertake to care for the child, if it should have the misfortune to lose its parents. This is not an empty form as in Europe, but is literally observed. It is not necessary for the authorities to interfere in the matter; even the poor man fetches his orphan god-child, as soon as he learns the death of the parents, and brings him up as a member of his own family. If the god-parents are also dead, there is invariably a dispute between several families, as to who is to receive the child. Often have I heard poor people say: "I bring up a dog, or some other animal; should I not rather undertake the care of a fellow-creature?"

This compassionate feature extends also to the suffering and indigent. In the war with North America, I saw persons tend and conceal their wounded enemies, incurring thereby great risk, and subsequently convey them back to their countrymen.

The Mexican is kind and indulgent towards his servants, and looks upon them as part of his family. Consequently one finds in many families old domestics whose counsels are gladly listened to. The nurses, as in the case of the ancients, often have the care of several generations, and the porter relates to the grandchild what horses he has led up for the grandfather.

As the Spanish language has been retained by the Creoles, so also many customs of the mother-country remain among them.

In the course of three centuries, this has been developed in a manner peculiar to the climate and soil, and the character of the Creole is no longer that of the Spaniard. A fertile country, producing abundance almost unasked, a clear sky, a mild climate, where the hardships of winter are unknown, have spoiled the Creole and rendered him more indolent and thoughtless than his transmarine relations; but he has retained the liveliness, the excitability, and the romantic sentiments of the latter. The Spaniard is essentially conservative, the Mexican Creole is for progress; he is liberal and tolerant even in religious matters, whilst the Spaniard never quits the established forms in church and state. The Spaniard labours perseveringly, seeks also to profit in detail, and saves what he has earned for old age; the Mexican earns with facility, but just as easily lets it slip through his fingers; he seeks to enjoy the fleeting moment, and leaves Providence to care for the future.

I could easily continue these parallels, but an allusion to them is sufficient. Separate pictures of popular life will best complete the universal lineaments, and animate them with light and colour.

XII.

THE ABORIGINES (INDIANS).

In order to be consistent I ought to proceed with the former chapter, describe the life of the Creoles in town and country, delineate groups at church and at the theatre, at the ball, and at the Chambers: but a picture of the checkered life of the people never presents us with Creoles alone, the coloured people*) being never absent. I must therefore first describe the component parts of the people separately. The Indian claims attention before the others; he is the original lord of the soil, of the purest full-blood, original in appearance, life and manners.

The aborigines of America, from Canada to the mountains of Araucania, have fundamentally the same type of features, greatly modified of course by position and climate, mode of life, and peculiar customs. The aborigines of Mexico, too, though divided into many races, separated by totally different languages, exhibit at the first glance the peculiarities of a race.

The colour is reddish-brown, the skin smooth and soft, consequent upon the cellular tissue being thicker, and preventing the marked development of the muscles, or the appearance of the veins. Red cheeks are occasionally met with in the young females. The hair is coal-black, thick and sleek, the forehead low and not prominent, the back of the head large, and seemingly pressed upwards. The face is a pleasing oval, the cheek-bones are somewhat broad, the eyes large and dark, and, as in the Caucasian race, are placed horizontally (not slanting as with the Mongols). The white of the eye is yellowish, and affords a singularly wild expression, especially when inflamed with passion. The nose is slightly bent, broad at the lower part, the mouth usually large, with thick lips, but not pouting as with the African race. Two rows of dazzling white teeth are an enviable addition to the Indian physiognomy.

The chin is round and full; the man having but little beard, which is only now and then seen on the upper lip. The neck is short, the nape broad and strong, the chest prominent. Unlike the Caucasian race, the breast of the woman is not spherical, but parabolical, almost conical. The hips are strong, the leg muscular and firm, more so than the arm; the hands and feet are small, in females usually round and graceful. The appearance of the men is sturdy, and they are seldom above the middle height; the women are short and fat.

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*) Coloured people, 'gente de color,' in America, are all who are not white, consequently black, brown and mixed.

M. Rugendas del.t

G.M. Kurz sculp.

INDIANS OF THE TIERRA TEMPLADA

INDIOS DE TIERRA TEMPLADA. MEXICO INDIER AUS DER TIERRA TEMPLADA.

One often hears, that the children of the Indians are born white, and become brown in the course of time; this is incorrect. The infants are certainly lighter than their parents, but not white; they have a yellowish tinge; only the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet are white, and remain so all their lives. Many handsome children are seen with large animated eyes, and long eyelashes; but they do not long remain thus, the features becoming hard and dull. The Indian has mostly a peculiar sorrowful appearance, a melancholy expression about the corners of the mouth; at least so it appears to us. But he is not so in reality. I never saw a gayer people than these Indians among themselves; they chat and jest till late in the night, amuse each other with jokes and puns, play tricks and laugh. Towards the Creoles and Mestins indeed they are cold and reserved, they have no confidence in them, nor do they understand the language sufficiently to express themselves fluently; for amongst themselves they invariably employ the Indian tongue. I shall afterwards refer to the character of the Indian; for the present I only intend describing his exterior. In the whole corporeal 'habitus,' a finer nervous organisation is less evident than a predominant development of vegetative life.

The child is born with a thick head of hair, and even in extreme old age the scalp does not become bald; the hair, too, very seldom turns grey. The teeth remain sound to the last; and I have often seen skulls that had lain several decenniums in the earth, in perfect preservation, and with all the teeth. The skin of the Indian appears to be less sensitive of heat and cold; external injuries, even deep flesh-wounds, heal with incredible celerity, and without any wound-fever. This remark is not founded on superficial observation, as I have seen many cases of the kind, and have heard the opinion of physicians of acknowledged experience, who have made numerous observations on the spot. With my own eyes I saw an Indian's skull fractured in a quarrel, so that he lay without sense; constant vomiting seemed to indicate a concussion of the brain; and although his comrades applied their customary remedy, washing with brandy, he recovered. A severe sabre-cut in the head, which cleft the bone, so that the brain was visible, several stabs through the lungs, with an inward discharge of blood, a cut through which half of the spleen protruded, which, as it could not be restored to its proper place, was cut off, and many other dangerous wounds healed rapidly without any wound-fever. The most dreadful injuries of the extremities, such as crushing the fingers and hands in the sugar-mills, never produce lock-jaw in the Indian; he suffers the mutilated part to be amputated with as much indifference as though he felt no pain, and the wounds usually heal in a short time. If this exhibit an inferior degree of sensibility, it becomes still more evident in the effect produced by immoderate potations of brandy. The Indian never has delirium tremens, and yet many of them are habitual drinkers; one may even say that they are intoxicated half their lives; whilst drunkards of Caucasian race are in a short time irrecoverably lost by the poison of the alcohol. With nervous fevers, however, it is the reverse: the Indian succumbs to this more readily than the white; he neither rages nor becomes delirious, but all energy is wanting, and in a few days he expires of exhaustion.

The physician will know what weight is to be attached to these intimations, which I am only imperfectly able to judge of. An impartial consideration and observation of the Indians during many years forced me to the conclusion: that, according to their bodily organization, they are incapable of so high a degree of intellectual development as the Caucasian race. Not that they are deficient in keenness of perception, in distinctness of apprehension, or faculty of combination: but they want the broad and lofty forehead, they are devoid of that ideality which is the inheritance of a higher nervous development, of that subtle element which in Asia and Europe for thousands of years have put forth the finest blossoms of human cultivation. What has the American race done, under the most favourable circumstances of soil and climate in their vast continent? In the north and south, from time immemorial, hunting-tribes wandered hither and thither, like the beasts of prey, through the prairies and forests, opposed to all civilisation, mutually destroying each other, confined to a most narrow circle of the simplest religious ideas, their knowledge of art limited to producing the most indispensable weapons or utensils. On either side of the equator, in Peru and Mexico, where a higher degree of civilisation was developed, where the wandering tribes were rendered stationary by agriculture, and social union had procured a footing for intellectual cultivation: even there the culminating point of civilisation never attained to the practice of humanity. The religious systems of the Incas and Aztecs, their knowledge of astronomy, works of art, and mechanical labours for the purposes of every-day life, are the result of their powers of understanding, of the undeniable imitative talents of the whole race, of their aptitude and artistic skill; but the loftier ideal genius, the speculating Pallas Athene of the Greeks, and the beautifying Charis are wanting.

As yet we know not whether influences from the east may not have sown the first seeds of civilisation. Do not the two children of the sun of the Incas, does not the white man of the Mexicans, Quetsalcoatl, indicate the early influence of the Caucasian race? To the west lay the Hvitramannaland (the white man's land), which was known to the Icelanders as early as the tenth century; who can say how the threads of the civilisation of the east are attached to those of the west?

I shall leave it to others to solve this problem; and continue to speak of the Indians as they are now, as they have appeared to me in every-day life. Willingly do I acknowledge their aptitude in learning, and even the children exhibit much handiness, and practical sense. Intellectual creation is not the distinguishing feature of their race; they have little imagination, but diligence and perseverance. The educated Indians, and there are many who devote themselves to jurisprudence and theology, learn their respective sciences, but never get beyond their compendium. We find in them the talent of imitation and comparison, perhaps humour and wit, but no poetry.

The character of the tribes that I had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with, is in general not frank and open, but close, distrustful, and calculating. The Indian does not merely erect this bulwark against the members of another tribe or against

the posterity of his oppressors, which would be natural enough; but also against his own people. It lies in his language, his manners, and his history. Thus the salutations of the Indians among themselves, especially of the women, are a long rigmarole of wishes and enquiries after health, which are repeated monotonously and unsympathisingly on both sides, often without looking at each other, or even stopping. The Indian who is desirous of obtaining something of another, never asks for it directly, or without beating about; first he makes a small present, praises this or that, and at last brings forth his wish. If an Indian has a request to make of the judge or burgomaster of his village, who, like himself, is an Indian, and perhaps a relation, even though perfectly justified in making his demand, he first sends an intimate friend with a bottle of brandy or a fat hen (this is called sending the nosegay), in order to ensure the request a good reception. Deputations often came to me from Indian villages, to ask my advice about their local affairs; they always consisted of ten or twelve persons, fearing that one deputy would seek to profit by the matter in some way. The whole train then came into my room, one after the other, a grand dignitary or speaker at the head, each with a present in his hand. The leader commenced complimenting me with many bows, saying: "Good day, father, how are you? how is our mother, your lady, and the children. See, we come to bring you a trifle, it is little, for we are poor; but you must take the will for the deed." Now the whole troop approach with fowls, eggs, and divers fruits. It is useless to refuse: "You know my sons, I can't suffer this! If I can be of use to you, I serve you with pleasure. Keep your gifts, and say what you desire." — "Nay, father, we will not speak if you reject these trifles, etc." This ceremony being over, and the right honourable embassy invited to sit, the elders of the community squat on the floor in a semicircle, though there is no lack of chairs; only the spokesman stands erect, and in a carefully digested speech gives utterance to his wishes, the suite gravely nodding their heads from time to time, as if to lay more stress on the words. In their negotiations they are true diplomatists, and are fond of speaking ambiguously, in order to be able subsequently to interpret to their own advantage. In transactions with them, one must be careful to have all the conditions precisely specified.

If after a transaction of the kind, you offer them a glass of rum, every face beams, and significant glances are exchanged; they prefer drinking it outside the door, and he who returns with the empty glass certainly knows how to express his gratitude in such a way as to ensure a further supply of the nectar. If their character be displayed in matters of this kind, it becomes still more evident in numerous little features. The language itself abounds in ambiguous expressions, which they employ in order not to pronounce themselves too definitively. I have heard from priests, who spoke the Aztec tongue with great fluency, that they frequently were incapable of understanding the sense of a confession, as the penitent spoke in riddles and metaphors. An Indian can seldom prevail on himself to tell a stranger his name; and usually gives a false one, lest he should be compromised. He rarely

affords information respecting a third person, about whom he may be questioned; for example, if he has met him on the road; the customary answer is, that he has seen no one. In the commerce of life they are distrustful, and constantly fear being taken advantage of, because they are themselves inclined to cheat in a small way. Their little plantations are often in the midst of forests, or in concealed ravines, so as to have nothing to do with other people; they go thither by circuitous paths, that the track may not be found; and if a hunter chance to meet with the secluded settlement, they are highly displeased. It would fatigue the reader were I to continue describing these peculiarities; there are features in their character, reminding one of closely related hunting-tribes. We remark the prowling of the beast of prey in the obscure recesses of the forest, the restless eye, the keen perception, the crouching for the leap, but also the cowardice. Too much importance, however, must not be attached to this comparison, as it might easily lead to false conclusions. The present Mexican Indian is not tiger-like and wild; but his forefathers may have been, and in the northern country the Apaches and Comanches are so still. All the Christian Indians are submissive and servile, owing to the long dominion of the Spaniards, wherever they deem themselves likely to come off second best; but if they know themselves to have the upper-hand, they are arrogant and impertinent. They have the advantages of numerical superiority, constituting about five-eighths of the population, and one might fear their awaking to the consciousness of being a conquered race. This, however, is scarcely possible, as the history of their fathers is extinct with them; and only here and there a meager tradition existing. They are, moreover, not oppressed, as they enjoy the same rights as the other inhabitants of the country, are free citizens, and regulate the affairs of their communities themselves. Consequently no cause for discontent exists. Besides, there is a want of union among them, as before the Spanish rule; the numerous smaller tribes having been subjected by the sword of the Aztec. This variety of tribes still exists; more than four and thirty different Indian languages are spoken, which have as much resemblance to each other, as the Sclavonian and German; the Aztec does not understand the Otomite, the Maya the Migo, nor the Tarraske the Totonak, etc.; many of the tribes even hate each other. The people are, further, uncultivated and without energy, brutalised by intoxication, and confined to the narrow circle of a stereotype existence and train of thought. There is, consequently, no reason for apprehension; which has been proved by partial insurrections, caused by disputed territorial claims, and encouraged by the Mestins for party purposes; but which never assumed the character of a national rising, not even in Yucatan, where the revolt merely extended to the eastern villages of the Mayas, whilst those of the west fought against their kinsmen.

In the densely populated districts of Mexico, between the 18th and 20th degree, north latitude, in the ancient Anahuac, the constant intercourse with Creoles and Mestins has rendered the Indians more accessible, and their character less stubborn. They take service as labourers on the larger farms, are diligent and frugal,

and for the most part faithful, and devoted to their masters. Indolence, however, is the inheritance of their race, the etherial spark of reasoning perception has imparted no warmth to the incrustation of their intellectual being, they are confined to the same circle of ideas as three hundred years ago, but more stultified by their fondness for spirituous liquors, and by the set forms of a religion they are incapable of comprehending.

As far as we are informed by the early traditions and history of Mexico, the country was peopled by an agricultural race, dwelling in permanent settlements, and cultivating maize and the agave, cotton and indigo. In the twelfth century, after prolonged wanderings, the roving tribe of the Aztecs came from the north, founded Tenochtitlan, and by a singular concatenation of circumstances became the rulers in Anahuac. The conquerors gave up the nomadic life of their fathers, and adopted the customs of the conquered; the fishermen and hunters became tillers of the soil.

Even now all the aborigines of Mexico are tillers and gardeners, who live in communities, partly in villages, and partly also in the towns, where they have their separate quarters, for instance, in the capital, the quarter Santiago Tlalteloko, San Antonio and others. It is a peculiarity of the Indians, that their communities hold so firmly together. The elders will not suffer the members to disperse, nor to remove to other villages; and if during the summer they are forced to live near secluded fields, in order to guard against depredators, they are all bound to appear in the village on certain festivals, and to abide there after the harvest. This is not the case with the Creoles and Mestins, who frequently dwell in isolated plantations and farms.

The Indians are all citizens of the republic, and choose their municipal authorities according to law. In the genuine Indian villages, nevertheless, one cannot fail to observe the existence of the authority of certain aristocratic families, whose credit is rendered sacred by custom, and whose decree in all local matters is considered decisive. They keep the flocks together, manage the funds of the community (often to their own advantage), influence the choice of the communal authorities, punish the youth, and arrange marriages. All the Indians are Catholic Christians; the churches belong to the village, and many of the priests are full-blood Indians, as it is necessary for them to be perfect masters of the language. In the larger Indian villages, the community always let one of their number study theology, in order to have a priest of their own race. The priest must harmonize with the nobility of the villages, if he wish to maintain a position; if he live on bad terms with them, he is tolerably sure to get the worst of it. In another chapter I shall speak more at length on church matters, and will only observe here, that the Indians pay fewer church dues than the other natives, but are bound to furnish the pastor with a man and a maid-servant, and with messengers as often as he may require them. On numerous holidays, too, they have the privilege of tilling their fields, and their attendance at mass is dispensed with. Most of the Indian communities have their funds and land-

ed property in common, and are not to be prevailed upon to portion out their fields, which is highly disadvantageous for cultivation. Only a house-place and a garden are hereditary, the fields belong to the village, and are cultivated every year with out anything being paid for rent. A portion of the land is cultivated in common, and the proceeds are devoted to the communal expenses.

Having thus glanced at some general features, I return to the individual. The brown man is simple in his outward appearance; he is anxious to dress according to the fashion of his fathers. He wears short wide knee-breeches of buck-leather or coarse cotton; a kind of long jacket or short blouse without a collar, girded round the hips, covers the upper part of the body; he has neither shirt, nor waistcoat, nor any other article of luxury. On his feet he wears sandals, and has a little straw- hat or one of coarse felt with a low crown on his thick black hair, which many have hanging down to the shoulders. The tribe of Chinantecos in Oajaca always go bare-headed. To wear shoes or boots appears to the Indian of the old school, a pernicious innovation; to mount a horse they consider culpable pride. Even when they possess many horses, they ride a modest little ass, or at most a mule. A coarse woollen cloth, plain or striped, is the 'toga virilis' of the Indian, during the day it protects him from cold and rain, and is at night his only covering.

The dress of the women is a kind of sack bound about the hips with a girdle and extending to the feet. A broad mantel (huipile) with openings for the head and arms covers the upper part of the body. This garment is usually of wool and often skilfully embroidered with gay colours. In many parts a white petticoat, embroidered and adorned with ribbons, is worn by the richer Indian women, in others, the girls all dress in white. The thick locks of hair, braided with coloured bands, either hang down over the shoulders, or are tied up about the head. Heavy ear-rings, and broad strings of glass beads about the neck complete the toilette. Shoes they never wear, nor any covering for the head, except perhaps a folded cloth thrown over it when the sun shines too fiercely. But a small rosary, possibly with a scapulary attached and the stout thorn of a species of Cactus for a toothpick, hang about the brown neck of either sex.

The fair readers of these pages no doubt feel compassion for these poor people whose whole wardrobe is described in so few words. The unfortunates! they know nothing of all the thousand fine things that must be laced and clasped and bound about the human form to bring it to its proper shape, and yet the Indian girl yonder, in her white, almost Grecian attire, which conceals a form free and graceful as if chiselled by the artist, looks charming as a Nausikaa. The beautifully moulded arm is bare from the shoulder, the small white hand carries a fan of feathers, in the dark hair white blossoms of the blumeria (*cacalosutschil*, the favourite flower of the Indians) are braided; she smiles, and shows teeth like pearls, and her large dark eye is fiery as the sun of the south. Forms like this which may delight the eye of the painter are to be found among them. It must be said, however, that the case is often quite otherwise. Woman, who among all savage nations is regarded as a

beast of burden for man, is more frequently found worn out with toil, and confined within doors. Here let us for a moment look upon her in the drudgery of her daily labour.

The Indian's dwelling is in keeping with his simple person. In the warmer, well-wooded regions he generally builds his hut of wood. Unhewn logs support the beams and roof, are driven into the ground, and creeping plants which twine around them, supply the place of frame- work. Straw or palm- leaves constitute the roofing; the walls are made of sticks of bamboo, or slender stakes which afford the light free ingress to the interior. The roof on one side is commonly prolonged into a porch, supported upon posts. This main building is ordinarily about twenty five feet long, and fifteen wide, without partitions within. A smaller one is often joined to this to answer the purposes of kitchen.

Upon the higher table-lands the houses are built of unburnt brick (also of stones plastered with mud) with a flat roof constructed of beams laid close together with a covering of finely washed clay, which is stamped with great care. In the mountains one often sees roofs covered with shingles, and in the plains where the agave abounds, the flower-stalks and leaves of this plant are used for the purpose, while the walls — so-called dry walls — are built of stone without mortar.

Inside the hut, upon a floor of earth just as nature formed it, burns day and night the sacred fire of the domestic hearth. Near it, stand the *metate* and *metalpile*, a flat and a cylindrical stone for crushing the maize, and the earthen pan (*comale*) for baking the maize bread. A few unglazed earthen pots and dishes, a large water pitcher, a drinking cup and dipper of gourd-shell constitute the whole wealth of the Indian's cottage, a few rude carvings, representing saints, the decoration. Neither table nor benches cumber the room within, mats of rushes or palm-leaves answer both for seat and table. They serve as beds too for their rest at night, and for their final rest in the grave.

The utensils of the man, as a mattock and a hoe, together with a few strings and nets, hang upon the wall, and close by, the weaving apparatus of the women, consisting only of a few simple rods. A number of baskets of woven palm-leaves suspended from the beams above by grass-cordage, contain the scanty provisions of all kinds, salt, beans, rice, eggs, cotton, soap etc. These baskets take the place of chests and cupboards, and are thus hung aloft to protect the contents from the inroads of dogs, ants and children. Upon a longer line hangs a contrivance somewhat larger, perhaps three feet long by two wide, of twigs bound together, in construction similar to the traps in which boys catch titmice. The inside is covered with a piece of matting. Its purpose does not long remain a mystery, for a half naked Indian baby now and then lets his voice be heard; whereupon a push sets the basket in motion like a swing; and the little aeronaut is again brought to a state of slumber.

We entered the hut with the customary salutation. "Ave Maria!" — "En gracia concebida" was the reply of the man who was sitting upon a log of wood shelling

corn. A few chickens are assembled about him and greedily pick up the scattering kernels. These he now and then frightens away with one foot when they come too close. A few children, attired in the simple uniform of Paradise, were playing upon the floor. At our approach they with drew behind the mother, who was sitting upon the bare ground near the fire, engaged with her spindle, and stirring at intervals the pot over the fire with a stick. A few lean dogs were lying in the ashes. These raised their heads and set up a furious barking, which the master changed to a howl by hurling an ear of corn at their heads; which sent the uncalled for disturbers into the corner of the hut, where they were so unfortunate as to come into conflict with a setting hen, who defended her nest with the greatest outcry. Hereupon the Adamite in the aerial gondola awoke and brought himself into notice. The mother rose, leaned over the cradle, and quieted the little fellow by offering the breast.

"Could you sell us a little maize for our horses tied under the tree yonder, and provide us something for ourselves to eat?" inquired we of the Indian. A long discussion arose between the man and wife in the Indian language. They were unwilling to render the service, and replied repeatedly that they had nothing. We told them we only wanted a few eggs and beans with tortillas (maize-bread); and promoted our negotiations somewhat by showing our travelling-bottle and giving the man a draught from it. The urchin, who will not sleep any more, is bound like a little monkey upon the back of the mother, who with her burden kneels down before the stone, washes it, together with her own hands and arms, and proceeds to crush the half cooked maize and form it into flat cakes. A young stout-built Indian girl who has just arrived from the forest with a heavy load of dry wood assists in preparing the frugal meal, which contains as supplementary ground green Spanish pepper, an infernal dish, which burns the uninitiated to desperation, but by the Indians and Mestizoes is abundantly enjoyed at every meal. We are only able to talk a little with the man in bad Spanish.

The women and children use their Indian language only, which from their mouths sounds soft and pleasant. The people, like all the Indians, are peasants who down in the valley have their little field of maize that is just large enough to produce the year's supply. They also plant beans, pepper, tomatas, physalis, and solanum, sweet potatoes and cotton, but only enough of each for their own use. Every year a few swine are raised and sold, and also the chickens find their way to market in order to raise ready money for church and parish dues. The Indians in general, with their few wants, have abundance to live upon. In most instances they plant numerous fruit trees around their huts and make a considerable profit by the sale of the fruit. They collect and sell many sorts of raw products from the forest, gather pita and istle, (filiaments of the bromelie and agave) work as day-labourers, in short have many ways of making their life more comfortable; but they nevertheless adhere to their old mode of living, and the money they earn, the men spend in drink on holidays, or bury it to keep it safe. The lot of the poor woman is much the hardest. She does the greater part of the labour and from the proceeds of it receives nothing.

The women get up at four in the morning make the fire and grind the maize for the morning soup, while the men sleep, rolled up in their blankets like mummies. After an hour the broth (atolli) is cooked, the men drink a basin-full and stretch themselves out again. Meanwhile the work at the grinding-stone goes on to prepare the bread for breakfast. Thus passes the whole day. The women draw the water, bring the wood, take care of the children, prepare the food three times a day, spin the cotton and weave articles of clothing for all the family. All the sewing, dying and washing devolves upon them. One often sees the whole family at the brook washing one garment after another while the wearer lies rolled up in a blanket waiting for them to dry. On Sunday the poor drudge must carry the fruit, or the earthen-ware, which is her manufacture, to market, an infant at the breast, a heavy burden upon her back and often a larger child on the top of it. Such a sight is often beheld along the roads leading to the villages.

With unwearied patience on their return they lead home the tipsy spouse, or if his drunken limbs refuse to support him longer, sit by him in wind and storm till the heavy mists have passed away from his brain. Poor creatures! who shall blame them that they unite themselves rather with the Mestizoes, with whom a less toilsome life awaits them, or that they now and then seize upon a fleeting pleasure which presents itself as a compensation for the thorns.

The extreme density of the population within, an invariable circumstance connected with an Indian dwelling, had driven us outside the hut, and we were sitting before the door. "How does it happen," says my companion, "that these children, rendered hardy as they are by exposure and by the simplest food, come to have bodies so out of all proportion to their little slender legs?" — "That", replied I, "is the result of their mode of living. The child is nursed long after he has been able to run alone. Meanwhile the mother enjoys every sort of food, even though she knows it to be injurious to the child, and neutralizes the prejudicial effect of it by allowing the child to share it with her. If she eats oranges she squeezes some of the juice into the child's mouth; if she drinks brandy the child receives its portion also. Such a diet necessarily sours and injures all the organs of digestion. After the child is weaned, its only food is maize-broth and bread or beans, and these it eats all day long without having any stated meal-times. The abdomen thus becomes affected with scrofulous swellings. Commonly they acquire the habit of eating earth and lime instinctively, to counteract the acidity of the stomach, and as soon as the parents notice it, they give them white-lead, their only remedy against earth-eating. Can we wonder that with such a diet the greater part of the children die under four years of age? When we also take into account that marriages are contracted very early in life, that through the intermingled family relations in the same village, hereditary disease is continually striking its roots deeper and deeper, that an almost exclusive vegetable diet allows the blood to degenerate, and that drunkenness unnerves the system of the men, it will no longer seem strange to us that the Indian population

is hardly on the increase, and that every great epidemic, such as the small-pox or cholera, causes an important retrogression!"

The subject of our conversation led us to speak of the usual diseases of the Indians and their remedies. In the regularly qualified physician they have no confidence. In every village there are a few old women to whom Aesculapius himself must yield. They understand the virtues of various plants and how to anoint and rub with different oils; know when it is necessary to place a black hen upon the feet of one sick of a fever, or to lay half a hen upon the abdomen to remove the inflammation, and understand also how to restore the stomach to its proper state when attacked by the cramp, a disease very common among the Indians. This latter operation is in the highest degree violent. The patient stretches himself upon a mat, and the old sibyl gets down upon his body with her knees, and pummels and kneads it with her clenched hands from the pit of the stomach downwards and sideways till the poor Lazarus groans and howls again. At last a broad girdle is tied about below the chest so that the stomach may not be again forced up out of its place.

The Temascale or steam-bath, the use of which among the Indians is of great antiquity, plays a conspicuous part in the cure of nearly all diseases. Imagine a little vault built up upon the level ground to the size of an oven and just high enough within to allow one to sit upright. Upon one side is a low entrance through which one is obliged to crawl upon all fours, and upon the adjoining or opposite side a stoke-hole which is closed within with broad flat fire-proof stones. Here, from the outside a fierce fire is built up till the stones are red hot. The bather now slips in through the hole, lays himself down upon a mat, and pours water upon the hot stones. This is at once converted into steam, which he brings into immediate contact with his body by means of a bundle of twigs. Two persons usually take the bath together, that they may be able to assist each other. When all the pores are open, cold water is thrown upon the patients, who are then rubbed and subjected to all the operations of a Russian bath. Both sexes apply this bath very frequently, simply to refresh themselves after severe labour, or for purposes of cleanliness (indeed one scarcely finds a house without a temascale), but it is also the universal remedy for all diseases. The third day after her confinement the woman takes the steam-bath Whether the disease be typhus or inflammation, scrofula or tooth-ache, the patient must sweat for it; and if the result is obviously injurious, even if hundreds die after the bath, it nevertheless loses nothing of its reputation. The effect of the cold taken after the bath is often worse than the bath itself, since the temascale is never in the house, but in the neighbourhood of the same.

Indeed it may well be supposed that among so uncivilized a people, a deep-rooted superstition in matters of the healing art would play a conspicuous part. The Indian believes in witches (naualli) and imputes certain diseases to them which can only be opposed by magic; in the evil eye, the terror of small children (it is generally the result of a sour stomach), which the priest alone can cure by reading the gospel till the evil disappears. He fears the evil wind (Checatl) a malicious spirit

of the elements which dwells in the waters. Thus if an Indian suddenly is attacked by any kind of pain, such as rheumatism or cholic, Checatl is the cause of it. He falls to considering now what water he has last crossed; for there it is that the sprite has seized him. To this water a new pitcher is brought before daylight, together with some fresh maize-bread in a new cloth, a shell of maize-broth and another of chocolate. The name of the sick person is then pronounced three times in the empty pitcher with its spout turned towards the water, which is to induce the Checatl to come and accept of the present. For the same reasons the Indian is very careful of the children when they go over a bridge, and if one accidentally tumble in, the spot where he falls is whipped, in order that the shadow may not continue to lie there, and thus be caught by the water sprites. It is in the highest degree worthy of notice how much this belief in water sprites resembles that of the German nations and the fables of the Greeks. In the depths of the rivers where they flow the most tranquilly and are overshadowed by the highest trees, dwells the Atlantschana, a sweet little figure that, floating along upon the water in a shell of many colours, sings enchantingly in the twilight, and all who approach the river, allured by her song, are drawn down under the waves. At the sources dwells the father of streams who, by night, walks about upon the shore tending his flocks, the fishes. The Indian also addresses his prayers to the mother of waters, when the rains have long failed, that she may send the clouds, and hang up votive offerings to her upon the mountain tops. In certain regions offerings of all sorts of food are even brought to the fountains, and offered to the nymphs upon the shore, that they may never withhold from the inhabitants an abundance of water.

It is only with great difficulty that one can arrive at these remains of the faith of former times, for they lead a life by themselves, and carefully conceal it from all who are not of their race. In another chapter, when describing Indian festivals, I shall mention many other similar observances, and for the present return to the hut, where our frugal meal has long been awaiting us.

A freshly plucked pisang leaf served us as a table-cloth. Two dishes stood before us containing black beans with a fried egg laid upon the top; the malcachete (I write the names as they are pronounced), a sort of earthen mortar, was filled with tshilmole, or broth of Spanish pepper, and a mountain of maize bread was served up in a schikale (dish of gourd-shell). When eating with the Indians one needs no spoon, nor knife and fork; these are articles of luxury unknown here, but instead, a piece of maize-bread, baked thin like a pan-cake, warm, dry and tasteless, is taken in each hand, and by this contrivance one manages, by bringing one hand to the assistance of the other to scoop up the food. With a little practice one gets along capitally, bites off a piece of the cake with each mouthful, and empties one's plate without greasing one's fingers. In the majority of instances the Mestizoes live in the same manner, but are better bred and speak better Spanish. On bringing the first dish they always use this expression: "blessed and praised be the holy Sacrament," to which the reply is: "for ever." After this, the host is prepared

to offer the customary salutation or wish that it may agree well with you, and if he joins you at table, before beginning to eat he makes a cross over his plate with the first piece of tortilla he breaks off. This pertains to people of quality, and distinguishes the Christian from the dog, as they are accustomed to say. Speaking of dogs, the lean creatures which had been so unceremoniously silenced on our arrival, now stood around us in a half circle with their tails between their legs, accompanying with their eyes every mouthful on its passage from the plate to the mouth, and receiving now and then a bit, which they caught with unerring dexterity. This, however, somewhat to our annoyance, attracted several black-bristled swine around us, that seemed to have no objection to hazarding a charge upon our supplies, and would have carried it perhaps into execution, had not the little urchins appeared, now no longer clad in their paradise robes, but provided with some slight covering — in one instance rather shorter than necessary to be sure — who, with clubs and cudgels proceeded to rid us of our troublesome guests. The last tortilla which we took served us for a napkin and was then thrown as booty to the dogs, who quarrelled violently over it, and frightened away the Zopelotes (vultures), who as last expectants had modestly waited in the back-ground. The Indian woman who had brought us the warm tortillas, I mean the young one, who was really very good looking, was as solemn as a Niobe, no doubt from bashfulness, and because she could not speak with us. So I asked her in her own language for some water: "Nelschmakes tepizatl." — "Kema Patzin "(yes Father), replied she, and had such a mischievous smile, as much as to say: Well here I am; ask what you will, I am ready to answer you. But my Indian studies were of too limited extent to allow me safely to venture further, and I avoided compromising myself, by directing my conversation to the host and inquiring about his crops.

The Indians have some difficulty in comprehending figures, and this is easily accounted for from the fact that they have a different numerical system from ours. While our system of numeration is founded upon the ten digits, the Aztec has constructed his according to the number of fingers upon one hand, and counts thus:

1 2 3 4 5

se, ome, yei, naui, makuilli

6 7 8 9 10

tschik*uase*, tschik*ome*, tschik*uyei*, tschik*unaui*, matlactli,

11 12 13

matlactlion*se*, matlactliom*ome*, matlactli*omyei*,

14 15

matlactlio*nnaui*, kaschtulli,

16 17 18

kaschtullion*se*, kaschtulliom*ome*, kaschtulliom*yei*,

19 20

kaschtullion*naui*, sempoalli,

sempoallion*se* sempoallin*ome* etc., to twenty nine, and then thirty is formed: sempoalli-

onimatlactli or twenty and ten. One now counts on to twenty and nineteen and calls forty ompoalli, or twice twenty. The twenties now form the great groups, sixty is three times twenty, yeipoalli; a hundred five times twenty, macuipoalli, two hundred, ten times twenty, matlacpoalli. Thus we see that the fundamental numbers from one to four are repeated in every column, and at the conclusion of every five, a new word is formed till we reach twenty.

Twenty is already an incomprehensible amount for the Indian, as indeed many combinations indicate; for instance, sempoaschutschil: a many petaled double marigold; sempoatepatl: a mountain with many summits. When the Indian attempts head-reckoning he must do it of course according to his system, and has great difficulty in reducing the result to our decimal system, especially if it be over twenty. He knows that he often gets sadly cheated in consequence, and brings to the aid of his arithmetic all sorts of mechanical resources, such as maize kernels, beans etc. In this way our bill was reckoned up, which amounted to twelve quarters or three reals. Hereupon we parted good friends.

In the above I have given many glimpses at the domestic life of the Indians, and to complete the subject will add a few more particulars. Among these people there are some who are quite in advance, but nevertheless, their mode of life is not at all changed. One observes by the more spacious dwelling, which is lined with mats; by the altar which has a greater number of images, and is also furnished with a chandelier; by the multitude of parti-coloured dishes, pots and varnished calabashes, arranged upon a frame-work of stakes, that a wealthy man lives here. Such families have always their kitchen in a house by itself, and here sleep the whole family upon a simple mat on the ground, without any other pillow than a log of wood perhaps, without bolster or coverlet. In the colder season of the year, they all sleep with their feet towards the fire; but in summer, in the open air before the house.

The food of the Indians, as I have already mentioned, consists for the most part of vegetables, such as maize in all its various methods of preparation, beans squashes, and different kinds of roots and vegetables, which grow spontaneously in the fields, like the portulaca, phytolaca, cactus, palm-cabbage etc. They are very fond of fruits, and take great pains to cultivate them. Scarcely a meal passes without some sort of fruit, which is always eaten raw. The family all eat together, the women sit with crossed legs, the men squat upon their heels, and are served first. Their customary drink at meal-times and after meals is water, or upon the table-lands pulque. They also brew many sorts of fermented liquors, which they drink when they return from labour. In the lands bordering upon the sea-coast they drink the palm-wine or tuba, and also tepatsche or castile, prepared from the crude sap of the sugar cane with ananas or bananas, and made rather bitter by means of the mimosa root. Upon the table-lands, besides the pulque, the colonche (the fermented juice of the tuna, one of the species of cactus), is used for drink, also chicha, sentetscho and chilote. The latter is brewed from maize and barley, and consequently

a sort of Indian beer. All these drinks are alcoholic and intoxicating. On holidays the men collect themselves around a pot of liquor, and carouse till late at night. This is their greatest delight. They do not give themselves up to gaming like the Creoles and Mestizoes, but are fond of company, in which the women join, and also understand how to play their part at the cup, as it goes round the circle. If they once get excited, the soireé ordinarily ends with a grand disturbance.

The children continue to render obedience and service to their parents till they come to form families for themselves. As soon as the son marries, he removes to a house of his own, and then the father troubles hinself no more about him. The attachment of children to parents seems to me on the whole not to be very great; they are bound together rather by habit, than by any profounder principle: a natural consequence of that obtuseness of nature which arises from their want of culture.

The Indians stand at the lowest point of intellectual development, and that which has already been done for their improvement scarcely deserves the name. It is provided by law that every Indian village shall have one or more elementary schools; but since the districts must provide teachers for themselves, they generally choose the cheapest, and these are such as are in most instances unable to write correctly. They attempt nothing further than to teach their pupils a little reading or spelling, and by daily recitations to beat into their thick heads the catechism. This teacher is commonly in addition the parish scribe, indeed the only person in the village who can write at all; and by this means the amount of his instruction is very much diminished. Of course these evils cannot be remedied till the government provides for the education of competent instructors. This end would be best attained by providing from the Indians themselves a large number of elementary teachers capable of giving instruction in their own language and of teaching Spanish properly. The government of the state of Vera Cruz indeed made an arrangement by which every Indian village should support such a school and furnish a certain number of pupils; but this failed in the matter of funds, inasmuch as the villages declared that a tax of fifty pesos (dollars) a month, was more than they were able to raise. The indifference of the Indians in this respect is exceedingly great, and is often increased by the priesthood, who give themselves no trouble about scholastic matters, because it is rather for their interest to keep the people in ignorance, that their own authority may not suffer.

The majority of the Indians get their living by cultivating their fields and gardens, and do the work in precisely the same way as their forefathers three hundred years ago, except upon the table-lands, where the plough is used to some extent. In the mountainous regions and upon the coast, they till their little fields without the aid of the plough. They cut down the trees and under-wood, and when dry, burn it; and then plant the maize in little drills which they make with a sharp stake without further loosening the soil. In the course of the summer they pass over it twice with the hoe. On the borders of the fields they plant beans, squashes, Spanish pepper

and tomatas. As soon as the maize ears are half ripe they begin to pluck them Roasted or boiled they form a favourite dish of the Indians, and little cakes prepared from this green corn, called elotlaschcal, are regarded by them as pastry. The harvest in December and January is a festival at which young and old take part, and when their crops are all properly housed, a few weeks are given up to the 'dolce far niente' until the preparation for the coming seed-time again calls forth their activity.

Not all the Indian villages have territorial possessions of any extent, because the conquerors divided the lands according to the right of the victor, and the original possessors were obliged to cultivate the fields as serfs; just sufficient land being left them for their maintenance. This was especially the case in the vicinity of the capital and on the neighbouring plains, where only those tribes that allied themselves with the Spaniards for the subjection of their brethren were left in the quiet possession of their territories.

Upon the remote mountain-ranges and upon the unhealthy sea-coasts, the inhabitants retained their lands, because the conquerors feared in small and scattered bodies to settle among the conquered people. The abuses which were practised upon these serfs called forth, in the course of time, from the Spanish monarchs several enactments in favour of the Indians. They were no more to be treated as slaves; and a law required that a free possession should be granted to each village extending 600 varas or 1800 feet from the church in all directions, and in addition to this a square tract of 3600 feet base-line. All the villages which were formerly thus robbed of their estates, have this possession; and since this is usually not sufficient for their purposes of cultivation, they hire, at very moderate rents, smaller fields from the neighbouring estates. Many of the Indians upon the table-lands prefer to work as day-labourers upon these larger estates, where they are provided with a house to live in, and a certain measure of corn for every member of the family, in addition to the wages in money which every one receives who is able to work. Since they enjoy exemption from all church and parish taxes, their condition might be supposed to be preferable to that of those who inhabit the villages. But in general this is not the case, for these very Indians who constitute the quadrillas (day-labourers) of the Haciendas, are among the most miserable portions of the Indian population, and never will arrive at a state of independence. They are in reality a sort of *glebae adscripti*, not because they must, but because they will. Their household affairs in most instances hardly deserve the name; only these things which are absolutely necessary to existence are provided, and whatever ready money they are able to get is squandered in drink. When any special event is to take place, such as a baptism, wedding or funeral, or if rendered incapable of work by sickness, the employer must advance money upon their wages.

There is no lack of inducements for running in debt, for these people are not capable of saving money enough to procure for themselves the slightest article of clothing. The employer must give it them on credit, and deduct the amount from

their weekly wages. In this manner every labourer gets himself into debt; the children as soon as they can labour must help to work out the debt, which was partly contracted on their account, and the son must be responsible for the father in case he should die or become incapable of labour. One must not however suppose that this is an advantage to the employer; on the contrary it is a great annoyance and constantly attended with loss; for thus a considerable capital stands upon paper without bearing interest, and one has no means of sending away worthless hands without losing the debt with them; however from scarcity of help the land-owners are obliged to get along in this manner. The people are free to go wherever they choose, as soon as they have paid their debts. In many parts a full settlement is made once a year at Easter; in others, once a quarter, or once in six months. Then the labourers are at liberty to go to other estates if the proprietor will be responsible for their debt. Thus there commonly takes place an exchange of labourers, so that their accounts are reciprocally carried over and balanced.

Some writers, who have not come into immediate contact with this class of men, and are not well acquainted with the relation they stand in to the whites, have affirmed that the unfortunate Indian nations are really in a state of slavery, that people attempt to evade the law which forbids slavery, that the Indians are abused etc. This however is not true; the service is voluntary and conformable to a duly accepted compact.

This state of things we have mentioned, is oftenest observed upon the table-lands where it now and then may happen that the overseers urge on the idle with some severity; but nowhere is there any relation of ownership, as for example in the Dutch colonies in respect to the Budak, neither are the labourers ever mortgaged for debt, only the working men are required to fulfil their obligations, *i. e.* to work, while on the other hand the women are never bound unless they have expressly made themselves security for their husbands.

In other regions the Indians work as day-labourers, but live in their own villages instead of living upon the estates. In the state of Vera Cruz for instance, it is a very usual thing for one to order a number of hands from the Alcalde of an Indian village. These receive money in advance, but the whole village is security for it, and the authorities must send workmen till the debt is liquidated.

Some branches of agriculture are carried on almost exclusively by the Indians. Their patience and perseverance, together with their traditional predilection for these pursuits, alone prevent them from being abandoned, since they cannot be profitably carried on by more extensive planters. To these belong the culture of the vanilla and cochineal, which I shall speak of more at length in another chapter. Many plants are raised and used for food among the Indians which the Creole scarcely knows by name, such as the 'arum esculentum' a species of chenepodium, the tiger-flower (called by the Indians Ozeloschutschil, 'feraria pavonia'), the bulbs of which when roasted are not unlike chestnuts, a species of oxalis, some sorts of leeks and onions, and many others. To the historian a knowledge of these plants is of importance in throwing light upon the migration of races and progress of culture in general

The Indians carry on but few branches of industry in connection with their agriculture, yet they show both capacity and inclination for the arts and manufactures. I need only mention their beautiful works in wax, their imitation of fruits, figures representing scenes from the life of the people, ornaments for the churches and the like; also their taste for decorating the altars, for erecting triumphal arches before the churches or houses on marriage occasions etc. Everywhere throughout the country they manufacture ordinary unglazed pottery, like that found in excavations of their ancient graves, and often of elegant form. Candlesticks and toys they ornament with grotesque figures of animals, and show their craft in counterfeiting ancient idols, which they dispose of for good pay to British antiquarians, as the Romans do their newly baked antiquities. The Indians braid mats and baskets of palm leaves, prepare the filiaments of the agave, which they twist into cordage and ropes, varnish drinking-cups from the fruit of the cocoa tree, carve all sorts of vessels and household utensils out of soft wood, and make guitars and violins, which are ugly enough to be sure, but are very cheap, have proper proportions and a good tone.

Upon the rivers they constitute the fishers and ferrymen, and in the neighbourhood of the cities they furnish the wood and coal for the inhabitants. Early, at break of day, and till late after sunset one hears in the streets of Mexico, a melancholy long-drawn "Onsior", and sees the collier trudging in with a tall coal sack upon his back, who with his inarticulate croak designs to say: "Carbon señor (coal Sir!). Whoever has not seen the canal of Santa Anita (las vigas), has not yet an adequate comprehension of Indian industry. Unnumbered craft of all kinds come rowed along, from the clumsy flat boat, to the light canoe which can hold but one. The little Indian girls row lightly on with their double-bladed paddles; their boat is filled with vegetables, the outside decorated with flowers as if it were a bridal-boat, and the young people are gaily laughing and singing, while the old frog-catcher paddles, past with his booty, solemn as a baboon and equally ugly. Everything hurries and rushes along towards the market: whole loads of wild ducks and strand-snipes come from the lakes; fowls, eggs, fruits etc., from the villages, in order to supply the daily necessities of the great city. In the neighbourhood without the city lie the vegetable fields of the Indians, and those Chinampas called the floating gardens. These garden lands have been won from a marsh; a simple turf covering under which the water stands. On a strip of this land brush has been thrown, whilst at the sides deep ditches have been dug and the earth thrown up over it. As often as the ditches become filled, which is pretty often, the earth is again thrown on the bed. When the soil is a foot thick over the water, it is planted; and the plants flourish well because they never lack moisture. These gardens rest upon insecure foundations and totter beneath the tread; and we can well imagine that in earlier times, before the artificial draining, when the valley was often inundated, that such little islands may have been detached in a storm, and floated off. However, at present they all lie at anchor, and the wind is no more able to blow them adrift. They look right cheerful,

surrounded with balsams and pinks and border flowers, and planted with plump cabbages, lettuce or parsnips.

The broad way along the canal, as well as the canal itself, is crowded with market people — all Indian — men, women and children — some driving loaded asses before them, others with great burdens upon their backs, but all moving at a short trot. This sort of dog-trot is peculiar to the Mexican aborigines; laden or unladen they always keep it, and never get out of breath, even in climbing the steepest mountains. There can be no better messenger than these Indians; with a tompiate, with totopo or roasted maize bread, they undertake the longest journies, travel from forty to fifty miles a day, and spend nothing upon the way but their scanty supply of provisions. Over rugged mountains and through the ravines they carry burdens of seventy five or a hundred pounds for journies of many days. They undertake the transport of goods for considerable distances, as, for example, from Tabasco to Chiapas, over roads which are impossible for beasts of burden; and indeed they often carry travellers upon their back, up these almost perpendicular precipices. They are so accustomed to carry something upon their back, that when one, in Oajaca for instance, wishes to send one of these Indian messengers with a letter, he makes up a package of stones of ten or twelve pounds' weight, to which he adds the letter, that by this means the bearer may not forget that he has a commission to execute.

The Indian carries his burden upon his back by means of a rope and a broad strap which passes over the forehead. The broad shoulders and strong legs seem as if made for this kind of labour. Many Indians are employed in the mines as carriers, and since they are paid by the job, according to the weight of ore which they bring out of the mine, they come to be virtuosos in this sort of business. One would hardly believe it possible that a man could thus drag a load of more than five cwt. of ore, from a depth of over a hundred fathoms, up ladders consisting simply of round trunks of trees, in which steps have been cut with an axe, and yet I have seen those who day by day could bring out such enormous burdens. At the foundry of Arcas there lived (or is probably still living), an Indian, who carried a weight of sandstone of six hundred pounds, from the quarry to the smelting house, a distance of about three quarters of a mile.

With such an inborn capacity as beast of burden, we need not wonder that the Indian carries the produce of his field or garden many miles to market, to bring back for it a few pence in return. Times without number I have seen the Indians of the mountains travelling twenty five or thirty miles to a market, over paths whose difficulties one can hardly conceive, bearing a heavy basket of apples or potatoes upon the back, in company with their wives, who are laden in the same manner. Tired out, and perhaps wet through by showers of rain, they arrive at their destination, and pass the night in an open porch, in order early in the morning to offer their products for sale, the whole receipts of which are ordinarily not half the sum they might have earned in the same time as day labourers. Nevertheless they are not to be turned from their beaten track, for they are able to obtain in exchange their little necessities, and have not sufficient forethought to see that they

may be procured more advantageously some other way. Soap, sugar brandy, and salt*) are the usual articles which they bring home with them in return, and a good drunken frolic into the bargain.

By going out in the afternoon to one of the gates of Mexico, either that of Belen or San Antonio or San Cosme, one can observe the trains of Indians wending their way home to their villages. What a contrast with all that surrounds them! Splendid houses, magnificent carriages, elegantly dressed ladies and gay dandies; and close by, these poor half-naked Indians, the men in front, the women in the rear, the children upon their backs, speaking another language, wearing another dress, and of a different colour from their fellow-creatures who promenade the streets. There they are trotting along towards their home, joking and laughing among themselves, caring little for the world about them, a distinct people within a people. Yonder, under the tall poplars stands a pulqueria, a shop where their favourite drink the pulque is sold; there they must stop to take one drink more. Dense groups are standing round; godfathers are greeting each other with hat in hand and making profound obeisance; the well-filled cup goes round from mouth to mouth and the discourse grows eloquent in praise of the precious nectar. The wives sit down upon the ground and take the children from their backs, give the little one the breast and stop the mouth of the bigger one with a cocole (a kind of small, sweet, dark coloured roll), but all the while keep an eye to the pulque bowl, if perchance the husband or a gallant neighbour should hand it them. Want and toil and the long journey are forgotten; louder and louder grow the assurances of friendship among the men, oftener and oftener they come to the wife for another quartilla (a quarter real or about three cents), for she has the proceeds of the market tied up in her girdle, and after every new drain upon it, she reties the lessening bundle with a sorrowful look. Now the mirth grows boisterous; in some groups the women begin to follow the example of the men; here is a crowd making merry and dancing to the strumming of a farana (a small stringed instrument), yonder the rising hilarity makes them tender, whole drinking circles embrace each other, lose their equilibrium and fall, to the infinite delight of the others. The bestiality is now under full sail, and no one notices that the sun has already set. Jealousy brings the women in contact, who commence a vigorous conflict, tug at each other's hair, scratch and bite each other; even the men get to blows, excited by their fellow-lazzaroni: the uproar becomes fearful, till at last the police are among them, who take the combatants to the watch-house, and dis-

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*) The salt-works of the interior are mostly carried on by Indians. There are many rich salt springs in Mexico, for example those of Istatala, Istapa, Chautla etc. They convey the brine into flat stone vessels, where the water evaporates in the sun; or make a rim of clay upon a broad flat stone, upon which they pour the salt water, and let the sun do the rest. The same is done on a larger scale with sea-water, both on the Atlantic and Pacific coast, especially on the coast of Yucatan.

perse the rest, who after many vicissitudes, at length reach their village, fully resolved upon a repetition the next time they go to the city.

Such are the Indians of the present day. I shall often have occasion to revert to them in descriptions of Church festivals, marriage ceremonies, burials, and the like.

XIII.

THE MESTIZOES.

In treating of the different classes of Mexican population in my first section I have characterized the Mestizoes or Mestins in general. The coloured population, including every shade from almost white to the darkest brown, are classed in this country under the general expression of castes (castas). The Negroes are also included under this name but not the Indians. Consequently in official communications, statistical tables etc. we find the divisions: Whites, Indians and castes.

I have noticed above that the number of Negroes is but small, and almost exclusively confined to sea-coast districts. There they maintain themselves, partly by marriages with negroes of pure blood, and partly by the immigration of free blacks from Louisiana, from Cuba and other of the West Indian islands. As they have few national peculiarities, but conform in their habits to the Mestizoes in general, I shall omit to speak of them in particular.

The Mulattoes, who in part are the descendants of a black mother and white father, and in part the result of various interminglings of Mulattoes with Negroes, Indians, Mestizoes or Mulattoes among themselves, are so manifold in their nature, that the name which once indicated the degree of intermixture, no more suffices to give a clue to it. The appellation now embraces all in which the African type of crisped, woolly hair, flat nose, thick lips, coarse hands and feet etc. is to be traced. They also go under the name of Chinas and woolly-heads, and are found almost exclusively upon the coasts.

The Mestizoes are properly the offspring of a white father and Indian mother. In a period of three hundred years, a numerous population of this class was formed, and as the elements still exist, is still forming, although much mixed through the various relations of the Mestizoes among themselves, and with the whites and Indians. This is the Mestizo race of which we are to treat in this connection.

M. Rugendas del.

C.M. Kurz sculp.

DANCING MONGRELS.

LOS MESTILOS. PASEO DE LAS VIGAS. (MEXICO.) *TANLENDE MESTIZEN.*

Drawn & Written on Stone by C.M. Kurz & Co. in Augsburg.

The Mestizo has an inborn originality; is the representative of national customs and peculiarities which cannot for a moment escape observation. While the Creole has taken for pattern his progenitor the Spaniard, and sought as far as possible to reproduce him, while the Indian was quietly preserving the usages of his forefathers without ever being able to assert a prominent position, the Mestizo has never been anything else than Mexican, and the Creole has adopted his peculiarities rather than the reverse.

The Mestizo is a hardy fellow, of lank elastic form; his complexion is not white, neither is it copper-coloured like that of the Indian, but a light brown, through which the flush of the cheeks appears. The hair is thick and black, but softer than the Indian's, the forehead higher, the eyes brilliant, sometimes black, sometimes hazel. He has inherited the Roman nose and heavy black beard of his father, the white teeth and small foot of the mother. One might take him for an Arab, as lance in hand he rushes past upon his light steed. He is an excellent horseman, of a bold excitable disposition, temperate and persevering, but levity itself; always prepared for the dance or game, undisturbed by any care for the future, if the present moment has anything to enjoy.

If my reader will accompany me, we will enter that stately village, just visible through the thick dark foliage of fruit trees. It is Sunday, and the people are assembled yonder for church as if for market; for there is still the same condition in Mexico as existed a few centuries ago in our own country. The church brings together the inhabitants who live scattered far and wide throughout the village. They take the products of their field with them and purchase with them whatever they need for the coming week. In Germany the name mass is still retained for certain markets which had attached themselves to the church, and at which a special mass was read. Thus also here; around the church is the market, and during the service the noisy crowd is in full activity until the bell announces the act of transubstantiation within, when suddenly all becomes silent as the grave; at the third stroke the multitude cross themselves, and then at once the tumult of business goes on again. In many villages, especially in the mining districts, a special mass (misa de plaza), is read for the market people; a portable altar is set up in the porch of the church, trade and traffic cease as if through some enchantment, every seller kneels beside his wares and with his face turned towards the east receives the blessing.

Let us walk along through that broad cheerful street leading to the market. It is paved and has side-walks of broad flag-stones. The houses are all of one story, partly with flat roofs and partly covered with tiles. They are painted white, and have large windows with wooden lattice-work instead of glass. All the streets cross each other at right angles, and nearly all the corner houses are stores, in which many men assemble, partly to trade and partly to drink. The market square is a large quadrangle, one side of which is formed by the great stone church, adorned and shaded by several rows of cypress and orange-trees. Larger houses, mostly of several stories with arcades, make up the other three sides. Among these the one

with the flag-staff upon the roof is obviously the town-hall. In the one adjoining, probably the priest dwells, for a clerical-looking gentleman is standing at the door, and the rest are trading houses of the Spaniards or Creoles who carry on business in all the villages throughout the country. Now let us turn our attention to the market. The articles for sale are arranged in regular rows. Vegetables and fruits of all kinds, maize, beans, coffee, brown sugar, fresh and smoked meat, fish, poultry, earthenware, mats, baskets, dry goods of various kinds, iron-work and toys: these are the commodities which one finds exposed for sale on Sunday in every large village. At one end are tables loaded with drinks, and in connection stewed meats, with reddish broth of Spanish pepper and fresh tortillas (maize-bread).

Among the traders one distinguishes at the first glance the Mestizoes from the Indians, by their dress, complexion and language. The Mestizo is also clad differently from the Creole, who imitates the European fashions, but the garb of the former is not ill-looking, and is particularly becoming to the horseman. In the warmer legions the Mestizo wears on Sunday a white shirt carefully plaited or embroidered, rong wide trowsers of drilling or various coloured cotton-stuff, fastened round the hips by a gay silken girdle; brown leather gaiters, a broad-brimmed felt hat and a parti-coloured covering thrown over the shoulders for a mantle. He never cumbers his neck with a cravat, his shirt is generally open, and upon his naked breast a malls rosary or a scapulary is seen. The peasants or rancheros that live upon farms, usually distinguish themselves from the villagers by means of the calzoneras, a sort of trowsers, left open on the outside from above the knee, and through this opening the broad white linen drawers appear. They also gird themselves with a straight hanger, which is in no case omitted. The village artisans, tradesmen and mule-owners (arriero) wear upon holidays a calico or tick jacket, but dress like the rest on other days.

The Mestizoes of the table-lands wear everywhere the calzoneras of cloth or brown buckskin, and set off with many buttons on the sides. A sort of riding-boot of pressed leather, fastened about the knee by a coloured knee-band, protects the leg from thorns. The colder climate demands also warmer covering for the body; a cloth or leathern jacket is consequently worn, the latter often richly ornamented in front with silver buttons, needle-work of bright coloured leather and the like. A coloured silk handkerchief, loosely tied about the neck, and the woollen mantle *i. e.* the great carpet-like garment, resembling a herald's mantle hanging down behind and before, completes the defence against the cold. An embroidered band of pearls, fur, gold or silver-work, about the hat is never wanting.

The church-service is just ended and the multitude is pouring out through the folding-doors. In Europe the men are fond of gazing at the motley crowd of church-goers; and in Mexico they are not less so. We shall therefore be in no danger of offending against the customs of the country by falling in with the corps of observers. A band of proletarians forms the vanguard of the procession, barefooted fellows, whose attire indicates that they have not very long become sober. They are the last to go into

church and the first to come out; consequently they take their place close by the door. They have other reasons also for choosing this position, especially that they may be able to avail themselves of the precious time, as they say, during the sermon, to visit the nearest gin-shop, as otherwise the admonitions of the father would give them the headache, especially upon an empty stomach.

Next follow the peasants, all cleanly clad with their sarapes and mangas (simple or various coloured coverings) thrown around them like the toga. Immediately on stepping out of the church they exchange compliments with those about them, for it is the custon throughout the land to salute each other after mass. All these are Mestizoes, hale and robust of countenance with firm and graceful gait. The more thriving Indians go dressed in a similar manner (this is found to be the case everywhere among the mixed population), but they are easily distinguished by their complexion, lack of beard and inferior carriage. Now follows the crowd of women; first the unshod Indians in their embroidered huipiles, and many with children by the hand. Their step is hurried and not graceful, and their feet turn inward; they do not look about them and are not much noticed, for behind them are the wives and daughters of the Mestizoes. These latter are of good stature with elegant waist, prominent hips, easy and graceful carriage. In colour they are nearly white, their lips are fresh, cheeks tinged with red, and the movements of their dark eyes are far from phlegmatic. Their habit is adapted to the climate, light and simple. They wear a fine white chemise with short sleeves set round with points. It is plaited and cut tolerably open, but gathered with an embroidered trimming or selvage so that it may not stand out. A silken scarf is tied about the neck. Full skirts trimmed below with embroidered points, extend to the feet. A girdle of silken crape passing three or four times round the waist serves to fasten them. The material is ordinarily calico, but on Sundays, and when they wish to dress in state, they prefer white or coloured muslin, embroidered moll, and other light fashionable stuffs, with heavier, coloured under garments. Stockings are seldom seen (in the towns of the table-lands silk stockings are sometimes worn upon special festivals), but the little foot is encased in a satin or cloth slipper. An important article of clothing is the wrapper (paño de rebozo) a kind of shawl, of greater length than breadth, of a peculiar sort of cotton fabric and generally with dark stripes. This is thrown over the head; in such a way, however, that the face remains perfectly free. One of the long fringed ends falls down in front, while the other is thrown over the shoulder. In this way the body is covered, the face set in a dark frame, and the hands kept constantly employed. First upon one side, then on the other must the drapery be rearranged; the beautiful form is now disclosed now concealed, glances are exchanged, and since, constantly changing, the head can be turned at pleasure, an excellent opportunity is afforded for coquetting, and the lasses understand well how to avail themselves of it. The older ladies also conduct themselves after the same fashion, and as well as the girls allow their hair to hang down in long braids behind. Throughout the land caps are nowhere worn; but on horseback, a broad-brimmed hat like that

of the men, protects them from the sun, and the cloth which otherwise serves as a head-covering is now tied about them like a scarf. In the larger villages the Mestizo matron attires herself in a dress with waist and sleeves, at least on going out. She nevertheless does not give up the rebozo. The young people, on the contrary, north as well as south, will hear nothing of the sack, which as they say, binds up the chest and allows them no freedom of movement.

Really we have been gazing so long after the ladies, that we well nigh overlooked the rear-guard of our procession, and it is precisely this that imagines itself especially worthy of our consideration. The people of distinction (la gente decente) come last, for it passes for respectable with people of quality and good breeding not to walk out immediately upon the priest's leaving the altar, but to remain behind and say a few more Paternosters. Look out! here comes the heavy artillery, the pure blood, the genuine Castilian! "Who are these?" asks one at our side. "What magnificence! What a fat lady though!" "Do you not know her?" returns the other. "That is Doña Pomposa, the wife of the judge, with her two daughters. What splendid creatures (que lindas criaturas)!" In the Spanish parade step the noble dame bears down upon us, clad in light blue satin, a sulphur-coloured shawl forming the drapery of the head and shoulders — laced to a fearful extent, but yet three fathoms in circumference. With the air of a conqueror she bestows her salutations left and right, and her two chicklings, already pretty well fledged to be sure, and of no inconsiderable weight, smile graciously and play with their fans. The lady of the Alcalde follows in black silk attire, attended by her niece, a tall, spare, cinnamon-coloured woman, and obviously in bad humour because slightly eclipsed by her predecessors. The Alcalde and judge, the one in dress, the other in frock-coat follow, apparently absorbed in state matters. Then come a few more ladies and gentlemen of different ages, some in half, some in full European costume, who, as I learn from my neighbour, are the families of the county-clerk, custom-house officer, merchants etc.; the ladies all regular beauties, and stared at and admired by the spectators.

Entirely in the rear come a few closely-veiled female forms. The tips of their noses are scarcely visible, and their step in the highest degree measured. "And these?" asked I. "Are devotees" (beatas) replied my neighbour. "Church-spiders, altar-feeders; but it is not so bad after all; they have tender hearts, and when a handsome fellow presses their hand, they by no means scratch his eyes out, notwithstanding they confess every week." — "I am obliged to you," returned I, "for this pleasant piece of information. I should never have imagined that civilization had already found its way so far into these remote regions. This is precisely the case also in Europe."

On a Sunday morning after church, in one of these villages at the foot of the Andes, are very many things said and thought about, rather more nearly connected with this world than the next; therefore what we overhear from the two swarthy fellows walking in front of us need not create surprise. "Hear Pepe, the fair blonde has given me a wink; it is all right!" "Where did you see her then?" — "At church. I calculate upon your horse." At this point the words are lost in the wind, and the two speakers in the market-crowd.

In the country the number of Mestizoes is unquestionably greater than that of the white Creoles. The class of small land-owners and farmers, the scattered peasants and shepherds are nearly all Mestizoes. Precisely this brave, simple, industrious, trustworthy peasantry is the heart of the Mexican nation. It has so much originality in its entire appearance, that we must devote a chapter exclusively to it.

Among the artisans of the towns and villages there are indeed many Creoles, but also many Mestizoes, who since freeing themselves from Spanish authority have apparently improved their condition, and have sufficient ambition to undertake to cope with the whites or even to surpass them.

The trade was formerly entirely in the hands of the Spaniards and Creoles, but now there are many Mestizoes occupied in it. They have charge especially of the trade at the markets, traffic in the products of the land and the like.

The immense host of muleteers or arrieros, by means of which nearly the whole transit business of Mexico is carried on, consists of Mestizoes. The merchant entrusts to his hands the most valuable commodities. They transport gold and silver ingots, rich ores and coin, giving no other security than a bill of lading. It is a toilsome life that this arriero leads. The whole year round he travels along the road with his beasts, now in the scorching, sickly regions of the coast, now upon the rough mountain-ranges; morning and night he loads and unloads the heavy burdens of his beasts, sleeps nearly always in the open air, and prepares his meals during the bivouac. Upon marshy ways, where in the rainy season his animals often stick fast, he himself must bear the burdens to dry land, wade through swollen, turbulent streams, keep watch over his animals, and in short endure the hardest fatigues that a man is able to bear; and yet he is cheerful and in good humour in the midst of his toilsome occupation. Scarcely has he pitched his camp covered his goods and fed his beasts, when he begins to dance by the fire to the sound of the jarana, and accompanies the dance with lively songs. Whoever has only cast a glance upon the country is acquainted with these tough, stout fellows, with their coarse woollen apron, their leathern cuirass and tapojo, a piece of leather to cover the eyes of the beasts while they are being laden, to which also a heavy whip is attached. Their constant intercourse with asses does not improve their manners, nor make their language the most elegant; but they are a hardy and serviceable class of men.

Nearly all the male and female domestics in the towns and villages are Mestizoes, they are apt and skilful, and distinguish themselves by their courtesy towards their employers. The servants upon a journey are far more expert and serviceable than the European; and instances of self-sacrificing fidelity in defence of their masters are by no means rare.

In the mines it is chiefly the Mestizoes who labour as carriers and pickmen, and as smelters and assistants in the foundries. It is enough to say in praise of their capability and endurance in these occupations, that German miners when placed in competition with them have not been able to equal them. Also in agriculture on a large scale upon the extensive plantations, the looking after and execution of all its various branches is entrusted to the Mestizoes.

In the cultivation of grain they have charge of the ploughing and sowing, and also of the boiling and purifying upon the sugar plantations, as well as the thinning and removing the suckers from the tobacco; — in short, everything demanding intelligence and judgment devolves upon the Mestizoes; the Indians only perform the mechanical drudgery of day-labourers. This is also the case in the raising of cattle; the Indian herds the sheep and goats, while the Mestizo overlooks the whole, and especially the breeding of cows and horses.

But the Mestizo by no means confines his activity to private life; very many devote themselves to study and find their employment in the service of the state or church. They have access to the chamber of deputies, as well as to the benches of the courts of justice, and appear in the monk's cowl, as well as in the officer's uniform.

It would be improper to call the Mestizoes the middle class of society, for one cannot speak of differences of rank in Mexico, such as exist in Europe. In one case he occupies nearly the same position as the Creole, and in another approaches the Indian, just according to his nearness of relationship with one race or the other. The Creole would gladly contest his equality, while the Indian hates him as the bastard of his daughter; thus apparently both poles are negative. But the positive lies however upon the white side, for there is the attracting force, and the nearer the Mestizo approaches the Creole in colour, the more easy becomes the amalgamation with him. Thus the progress is continually towards the whites. That which has once been torn away from the Indian race, rarely returns to unite itself again. The Indian seeks his marriage alliances only among those of unmixed blood; the ambition of the Mestizo is only satisfied with a wife of fairer colour than himself.

Vagabondism is found properly among the Mestizoes, receiving some accessions to be sure, from the whites and Indians. It is here not an incurable thing as in Europe, for labour is readily found, and homes and possessions are easily acquired. An efficient police would be able to eradicate it in a short time. In the large cities this nuisance thrives upon the outcasts of society, abandoned gamblers, broken-down drunkards, and idlers by profession. In Vera Cruz and Acapulco, the typhus and yellow fever have rendered the penal laws the most salutary assistance. Until lately the young vagabonds were thrust into military service; a matter that I shall speak of more particularly in another chapter.

The number of Mestizoes throughout the whole republic exceeds two millions, and thus constitutes over a fourth of the entire population. The whites and mixed races included, we must reckon the census at three millions and a half; the Indians at four millions and a half. But in moral influence the minority holds the preponderance over the greater, is bound together by uniformity of language and manners, and rules by its higher intelligence and energy of character. I have already noticed the active spirit by which the Mestizo distinguishes himself, and I may also add that he has the advantage of his father, the white Creole, in many respects. He has more decision and elasticity, and is less effeminate. Brought up to toil and accustomed to privation, he adapts himself easily to every situation, and overcomes

difficulties from which the Creole shrinks. In his family he preserves many of the patriarchal virtues: respect for age, kindness to servants, and hospitality. He learns with readiness, has about him no traces of fanaticisim or mystical dreaming, and in the intercourse of life conducts himself with ease and propriety. But he lacks development, instruction, and especially a simple moral and religious training. Precisely this defect is the cause of his anomalies of character. Having a perception of honour and justice, and much sound sense, his unbridled temperament urges him on to a thousand follies, ambition, gaming and women are the elements which kindle a volcanic fire in his breast, and fan all the passions into conflagration. Wounded ambition drives him to the wildest excesses of anger, and often to crime. Yet the storm quickly passes, and the clouds never linger behind. One thus offended once said to me: "I could not eat nor sleep; I was forced to seek him; I threw myself upon him and beat him till my heart found rest." This indicates their disposition, which however often leads them to fatal deeds.

Their inclination for games of hazard is a paternal inheritance, which had already found its way to America from Spain. They venture their money upon horse and foot-races, cock-fights and tennis, but above all, card-playing becomes with them a most pernicious passion. Wherever men assemble the bank is held, every one ventures what he has, and when this is lost, he plays upon credit. The farming peasants hold themselves most aloof from this, and play but rarely and with caution. On the contrary, in the towns, villages and mining districts, as well as on the estates, this vice is very common. The labouring classes can hardly wait for their weekly pay, that they may take their earnings to the play-table; and if the wife does not immediately appropriate a sufficient sum for the necessaries of life, the family on Sunday is often in the greatest want. The magistracy of many places attempt to suppress gambling, and send civil officers here and there throughout the whole of Saturday night (for gaming is carried on to the greatest extent at this time), in order to break up the clubs. But little however is accomplished by this means. The gamblers understand how to conceal themselves in all sorts of out-of-the-way places from the eye of the police. The effect of these games upon the character of the people is pernicious in the highest degree. It is purely selfish passion, and extinguishes every better feeling, as I have noticed in another place. The family is neglected, the desire for gain without labour destroys all relish for legitimate activity, their cheerfulness forsakes them, and since it is not easy to sit the night out without drink, drunkenness is an invariable accompaniment, and completes the gamester's ruin. This effect is visible upon the working-classes in numberless instances and would prove absolutely destructive, did not the inborn levity of the Mestizo mitigate its worst results. He loses whatever he has, skulks home in the morning twilight, perhaps without shoes or trowsers, but gives himself no concern about it, sings and dances on Sunday, and goes to work again on Monday in hopes of recovering his lost fortunes.

These same phenomena we observe also in the East Indies, among the Malays

of Java and Borneo, and upon the continent of Asia; except that there the passion for gaming reaches a still higher pitch, and the effeminate people are destitute of all energy and capacity for labour. The Mexican can work, and does work heartily, that he may have the means to play again. "Let them play" the owner of a large estate once said to me, as I was speaking with him in regard to the evils of it, "for it is only by this means that we have labourers. If these men were to save their earnings by leading a regular life, they would soon become independent." And this is really the case. Good economists who do not gamble, in a very short time work out for themselves a competency.

In matters of love, of all others, the Mestizo may not be crossed, for he is like powder. He does not coo like a sentimental dove, nor sigh in the moonshine; possession alone will satisfy him, and no obstacle is sufficient to deter him from the conquest. If he sees a woman who impresses his fancy, whether she be maiden or wife, he seeks to make known his inclination to the object of his love. But this is not so light a matter, for the daughter is always watched, and custom does not allow him to speak to her alone. Some confidential old go-between must consequently first prepare the way, and a dance must serve to bring the parties together. Both sexes are passionately fond of the "fandango", a name that the people apply to the dance in general. When a few rockets are sent up (the customary signal that there is dancing in the house) there is no more quiet for old or young; all gather round to see how the matter goes. A little space is sufficient, a few tallow candles or pine torches constitute the illumination, a few mats upon the floor serve as sofas for the ladies, a few guitars and jaranas, or a harp, for music.

The Mestizoes dance only the Spanish popular dances which are always accompanied with singing, and since the young people have for the most part much talent for music (nearly all play and sing and also improvise verses with facility), the music is not only easily furnished, but the singing affords excellent opportunities for making love and receiving messages. Love and jealousy, assaults and evasions, anger and reconciliation for ever constitute the subject of these songs, which are nevertheless of interest as the expressions of national peculiarity.

At these fandangos then, the larger share of love adventures are either entered upon or carried out. The bottle circulates freely with wine or some sweet liquor for the ladies, and brandy, tepatsche or pulque for the men. The songs follow each other in quick succession, more and more lively grows the dance, often they clap their hands in time to the music and at the estribillo (refrain) they whirl suddenly round, and the dancing couples stand face to face. Now is the opportunity for a word or signal, whereby they may concert a more lengthened conversation, as soon as they are able to escape the eyes of observers. A short rendezvous is sufficient to decide upon a place where they may meet with more safety, and if the difficulties are too great, the pair suddenly abscond in the night and darkness, and reappear in some other region as man and wife. This very often happens, and is an easy matter in a land where the institution of police is scarcely known by

name, where the many scattered plantations have little intercourse with the villages, and gladly receive all labourers who come in search of employment. Very often the mad adventure leads to marriage, but often too it is impossible, since one or the other party, perhaps both, are already bound by ties of wedlock. Numberless instances of this kind have come under my observation; many of my own servants had their wives upon trial, and it often happened that an indignant spouse or an enraged father came to demand back his own. In several instances I assumed the office of mediator, and there had the best opportunities of observing the morals of the people in this respect. All ranks are equally lax upon this point, the priesthood not excepted. I had once a fine fellow in my employ, who had with him a pretty young woman, pretending she was his wife. I was exceedingly well satisfied with him, but suddenly one morning both disappeared. This was dictated by prudence, for he knew that search was being made for him. He had been a monk in a Franciscan convent, and had run away, taking the young wife of a relation along with him as his travelling companion.

I have abundant material from the life of the people for piquant anecdote, which I might avail myself of in a more extensive work. I must content myself here however with only a hasty characterization of the various groups of society. — But we have left our church-goers quite out of sight, and hardly deigned the village nobles a look while we have been discussing these half-breeds. Shall we be pardoned for this? We will see. At the next corner dwells the well-beloved. We will attempt to double the Punta Gorda (the high promontory near Vera Cruz) in safety, and make a few other calls. Stay! here are the sirens; we must enter. "Senoritas we throw ourselves at your feet. How is your Highness' health? Excellent of course. Who could doubt it on seeing your splendid appearance!" Gracious smiles, charming assent. "But walk in, gentlemen, papa will be here in a moment, he is still at the court-hall." — In the village dwellings one enters immediately from the street into the chief apartment, the hall where the whole furniture of the house is concentrated. Here all guests are received, and only the most intimate acquaintances are admitted into the inner apartments, where the ladies are accustomed to indulge themselves in the utmost *negligée*.

"Capital that you are here to-day", said Donna Pomposa. "We are to have an entertainment this afternoon. There is to be a cock-fight." — "Yes and afterwards", interrupted Donna Victoriana, "we will take a walk to the fountain in the woods, a merienda*) to which all furnish something. You will join us though?" — "With pleasure, if I shall not seem intrusive; but it is perhaps a select party?" — "Oh by no means!" exclaimed Donna Conception, the youngest sister, who had long been impatient to have a voice in the matter. "The invitation is for all who will go with us. Mamma to be sure thought it would be better if only the respectable families

*) Merienda is the evening meal — a cold collation, taken about five o'clock in the afternoon, especially upon excursions.

should take part in it (*la gente decente* the white Creoles like to consider themselves in opposition to the Mestizoes), because the common people so easily crowd themselves in." — The old lady cast a significant glance at the speaker, and blew the smoke of her cigarette through both nostrils — "but papa said that would not do, because the second alcalde and the regidores (common council) could not be excluded. And I don't see any objection either; there are honest people besides ourselves although their colour" — "Silence!" cries the mother, who has lost her patience over this philanthropic development of the daughter, and directs the conversation to other topics, particularly to the question whether we shall go on foot or on horseback. The young ladies prefer riding, but the mother shows herself inclined towards the infantry, and I declare myself of her opinion from purely selfish motives. According to the custom of the country we should be under the necessity of calling for the ladies and of offering them the saddle; and I trembled for the back of my good horse, who would not only have the enormous weight of the dame to carry, but also my own, because it is the fashion for us to mount behind the saddle and play the devoted knight to the fair one. The judge came most opportunely to the rescue, and decided at once with his better half, and we parted light of heart, to meet again at the cock-fight.

About noon when the market closes, the people crowd into the shops, partly to make purchases and partly to drink. No regular beer-houses are found in all Spanish America. Sitting and drinking together is something entirely unknown. Whoever wishes to drink, calls for what he chooses, and drinks it standing before the bar. In the cities there are a peculiar sort of wine-houses, in which apart from the various kinds of wines, all sorts of distilled liquors are to be had. In the villages, the booths for the most part deal in dry goods, groceries of all kinds, and drinks. Nearly all sell bread, chocolate, sugar, spices, soap, candles, oil, Spanish wines, brandy etc. We may be asked perhaps, if there are no hotels how the traveller finds entertainment? In almost every village there is an inn (meson) where the stranger can find shelter for himself and his horse. These establishments resemble the oriental Caravansaries. They are huge structures built around a square court, with a multitude of little rooms, each with a separate entrance from the court. The furniture of the rooms consists of a fir-table, a ricketty bench, and a board bedstead. Whoever wishes to sleep in a bed must bring his own with him. Great stables are attached to the dwellings. Sometimes one is able to obtain something to eat in these "mesons" by ordering it, and sometimes one is obliged to seek it in the gambling-houses (fondas). This is a Spanish custom which has maintained itself to the present day, and moreover a very inconvenient one. Upon the main thoroughfares, and in the large towns, hotels are now everywhere established. In less frequented regions no sort of public entertainment whatever, is found in the villages, but every Creole or Mestizo gladly offers his hospitality, as in the days of the patriarchs; and whatever the house affords is never withheld, so that the stay of the guest may be made as pleasant as possible. I call to mind many happy hours which I have enjoyed in the families of these friendly Mexicans, whom I by chance have asked for

a night's lodging on my journey. Only the way-worn traveller in a strange and thinly peopled land, or above all the sick man, who has received sympathizing attention among foreign people, knows properly how to appreciate a noble hospitality. I have become acquainted with this virtue in many ways, and rejoice in being able to extol it.

XIV.

THE MESTIZOES (CONTINUED).

Let us now return to the shop where our peasants, whose homes are scattered about the country, are making their purchases of bread, chocolate, sugar; soap etc, The daughters are admiring the beautiful calicoes and silks, and begging the mother to buy them something. The latter stands looking inquiringly at the father, who insists that he has no more money. The tradesman knows how to avail himself of the favorable moment, and offers credit to any extent desired. If the husband now has already been taking a glass with his neighbour or god-parents, as is most likely the case, his heart is tender, and he says: "Buy what you will." Whole mountains of goods must come down upon the table: everything is examined, turned, and overturned, and the choice is made with as much difficulty as if the welfare of the house depended upon it. This indeed may also be seen in every city of Europe.

In the streets one sees many families journeying homewards to their farms, nearly all on horseback; for the Mestizo can dispense with anything rather than his horse. This is natural, for from childhood he has grown up with this domestic animal. The mother has the infant on her arm as she rides along, the elder children sit behind the saddle of the parents, and when six years old they are able to ride alone. On the wedding-day, the bridegroom brings and presents to his bride a saddled mare on which she rides to church; the father presents the son with a colt in order that he may break it in himself, and even the aged man takes pleasure in the horse that has so long borne him. When these Rancheros meet, they entertain themselves for hours about their horses, each praising his own for fleetness, intelligence and endurance, that one would really suppose each to be the direct offspring of Mahomet's famous mare; but on seeing them, they are often found to be hacks, hardly worthy of being converted into dogs' meat. The wealthy young Mestizo spares no expence in procuring a good horse, together with a beautiful saddle and trappings. Silver must glitter

upon the bridle, the housing is embroidered and adorned with tassels, and the dress of the horseman has something elegant and knightly about it. We shall form his acquaintance, at the festival of the shepherds, at which the Ranchero appears in his glory.

The Mestizo lives in general more simply than the Creole; indeed the majority have nearly the same mode of life as the Indians, but with somewhat more comfort and convenience in their houses. We commonly find, however, simply a bench and a table, and some board bedsteads covered with mats, and having a few sheeps-kins for pillows and bolsters. One usually meets with a kitchen detached from the house, where the family take their three meals a day, in order that they may have their maize bread warm from the fire. At meals the men sit upon low stools and take the plate upon their knees; the women sit upon mats. Knives and forks are not used. The food of the Mestizoes is distinguished from that of the Indians, by consisting chiefly of meat. The cooking is very greasy, and they eat in general much pork. On festive occasions there is a great slaughter of hens and turkies, for the Mestizoes raise poultry in abundance, and greatly enjoy eggs with their beans at breakfast: Fruits and confectionary are a necessity with them, and after every meal a lump of sugar is eaten to prepare them for drinking copious draughts of water.

The manners of the white Creoles have for the most part passed over to the Mestizoes; anong the wealthier, one will hardly find a difference, while the poorer portion more nearly resemble the Indians in simplicity of life and household arrange ments. This lies in the nature of the case, since the Mestizo constitutes a connecting link between the two dissimilar races, an organ through which the white race gradually assimilates itself to the brown.

The report of a dozen rockets was the signal for the cock-fight. In the great court-yard behind the town-hall the theatre was arranged, *i. s.* a circle of perhaps six feet in diameter was fenced about a yard high with boards as an arena for the spurred combatants, and a dozen benches of unplaned boards formed a half circle as the seat of honour for the ladies and guests of distinction. I will introduce my courteous readers, and the master of the ceremonies will take it as a great honour to be allowed to place such distinguished spectators in boxes of the first tier. Before the play begins, I will make you acquainted with the order of the day. Tradesman A. has challenged upon five tapadas; he bets a hundred pesos (dollars) upon the chief cock, upon each of the others fifty. Planter B. has taken up the glove. These tapadas, or blind fights are those where they who lay the wager bring their cocks concealed, and consequently no one knows beforehand the adversary that his bird has to contend with. These wagers are laid for weeks in advance, in order that each may have time to train his cocks. Amateurs breed whole menageries of these birds, and have several keepers for them. Each gladiator sits in a separate cage, the comb is cropped off smooth; by constant intercourse with men, he loses his rudeness, and becomes so far civilized as to allow himself to be caught without making an uproar, and bristles up his neck-feathers, and crows upon the arm of his keeper with an air of true military self-reliance. The care of them requires great attention. The utmost cleanliness and the strictest diet are observed, and

every day they are tethered in the open air, in order that they may enjoy the sun, and wallow in the sand; every day too they are practised in fighting. This takes place in the following manner. One cock is let loose and another is held before him. The one at liberty must now make the attack, fly aloft against the keeper who holds his adversary in his arm, and, in short, make a regular onslaught. Thus his courage is brought to the sticking-point. It requires great experience and discrimination to select a cock of ability. He must be of good family, of proper osteological structure, firmly built and powerful, with black eyes, a short black beak, and a full sonorous voice, that can hold out clearly two measures. Perhaps I shall be taken for a connoisseur in this matter. Alas! I am not even a dilettante, for my tender heart rebels against cock-fights and-bull fights, and all sorts of fights, whether of two or four-legged animals; but I was once initiated into the mysteries of "gallomany" while on a visit to a valiant Mestizo. I had gone to bed late and tired, and fell immediately asleep. It might have been eleven o'clock when an infernal uproar terrified me out of my sweet dreams. At about the same instant fifty cocks set up their trumpet concert in the immediate vicinity, accompanied by a furious flapping of wings, and as it was in December, the musical contest continued the whole night through, so that most undoubtedly no evil spirit ventured himself within a hundred paces of the house. The next morning I told the host my troubles. But the man was an enthusiast, and considered it as an attention to his hobby, and had no doubt I had heard but the divine voice (el canto divino) of his first and favourite concert singer, who had already come forth victorious from six combats, and could not be purchased for hundreds of dollars. I must accompany him forthwith to his galleria (cock cabinet) and receive upon the spot fundamental instruction both in the theory and practice of the science. It availed nothing that I gave repeated assurances of my regard for the patriarchal virtues of this lord of the feathered court, and moreover the gastronomical interest I took in him; I must promise him to cultivate this illustrious race, to which end he made me a present of a pair of breeders. Thus you see that really against my will, I attained to some instruction in this matter, which afterwards misled me now and then to institute cock-fights myself.

But see now how many people are entering with cocks under their arms, and tying them up in the shade. When the first regularly appointed fights are over, these take their turn. Now one of them enters the lists with his cock, and says how much he will bet upon him. Others take up the bet and furnish an adversary. The entrance of the *bon ton* of the village, together with the betters A. and B. awaken the attention of the public; the ladies take seats, the men make a few arrangements in regard to the umpires, who enter the arena; an orchestra of four guitars commences an overture, and now a rocket ascends. On this signal two men step forth with the hooded heroes of the arena, the covering is withdrawn, and we behold the noble pair. Immediately at sight of his antagonist one of the cocks crows, which is regarded as a good omen. Now they proceed to arm them, for the spurs have been sawn off close, and in their stead, sharp-pointed, curved knives, nearly three inches long, and of the strength of pen-knife blades, are bound to the feet. While this is going on, the spectators are laying their wagers. "Three

dollars on the red one!" "Three on the black one", cries another. The money (one is only allowed to bet with ready specie) is put into the hands of a third person, and whoever wins receives the whole. Many bets are made. The champions are now ready armed, excited by presenting other cocks at them, and exasperated still more by pulling out small feathers; and now the two are opposed to each other, and held apart by the tail feathers. All is breathless silence; every eye is directed thither, the neighbouring trees are laden with boys, aud at the kitchen-window of the adjoining house, an old woman stands with her head thrust out as far as possible.

"Let them go!" cry the umpires, and the enfuriated animals fly at each other like dragons. The contest is a desperate one; blood flows on both sides, but neither yields an inch, neither has received his mortal wound. They become exhausted, both are taken from the ground at the same time, fresh water is sprinkled upon them, and then they are let loose again. Now the one collects his last remaining strength, and makes a mighty thrust at his adversary, who meanwhile has also used his weapon; he falls indeed lifeless to the ground, and the victor utters his crow of triumph; but at the same time reels and falls: great, glorious, a hero!

The world, i. e. the witnessing spectators, give vent to their enthusiasm in praise of both the noble dead; a few minutes after they share the booty. The criticism and strife over, gain and loss drown the lamentations over the fallen. O bitter satire on human life!

Now other contests quickly follow, which do not all end so heroically as the first. There was one disgraceful flight, one victory through the fall of one of the foes, one undecisive combat because neither antagonist could longer keep his legs, etc. Let us go! for who can witness the sight of so much bloodshed. The past suffices for us. This sporting people offer up yet a whole army of valiant cocks simply to gratify their cruel selfishness.

On our proposed walk we find ourselves again in female society, for the fair sex is better represented than the other, who still remain at their barbarous sport. It is the most glorious weather; the sky is perfectly cloudless and of the deepest blue. No breath of air is astir in the leaves, and the dark green orange trees around the cottages of the village are so richly laden with golden fruit, that they can scarcely bear their burdens. Upon the tall bushes of the datura arborea glisten the white flower-bells and among them the scarlet euphorbiae and tree-like dahlias. The temperature of the air is mild, like that of spring in spite of the almanack's assertion that it is the 12th of December. To day we celebrate the festival of our dear Lady of Guadaloupe, the tutelary divinity of the land, whose image, in the contests against the Spaniards, had shone forth in splendour upon the standard of the native-born. According to the tradition, the virgin had appeared to an Indian in the sixteenth century upon the mountain of Tepeacac, a league from Mexico, and had given him as a token a wreath of flowers; and when the unbelieving bishop only laughed at the Indian, she appeared to him the second time, let her mantle fall upon him, and left in colours of light her image upon it. The Indian, Juan Diego, brought

the fresh token to the prelate, who convinced, sank down upon his knees and worshipped it. The pope recognized the miracle, and declared the 12th of Dec. a festival for Spain and the Colonies. A hundred years later, a rich cathedral was built upon the spot where the miracle was performed, and the preservation of the holy relic is given over to regular canons, who still enjoy the fat livings.

In the wars of independence the Mexicans chose their virgin as the leader of their battles, the Spaniards Our Lady of Succour (Nuestra Señora de los Remedios), a wonder-working picture of the Virgin, that Cortes' companions had already brought from Spain with them, and from that time had adorned a celebrated pilgrim-chapel six leagues from Mexico. Both virgins were the battle-cry of the contending armies, and so great was the enmity, that the Spaniards once held a court-martial on the brown virgin, the Indian, as they called her, and condemned her to be shot in effigy as a traitress, which, if I mistake not, was actually carried into execution near Puebla. Incredible vagaries of human understanding in the nineteenth century!

The Creoles maintained the mastery, and consequently her festival is solemnly celebrated throughout the land. Guadaloupe is a very common Christian name for both sexes, and therefore the day is celebrated as an anniversary in many families with dance and song. The children play cock-fights in the streets with great hilarity; here they have their cock-chicks, and let them peck each other; there, two little brown bare-footed fellows must improvise the part of the cocks; they are held by their frocks by two older ones, and spring at each other, to the amusement of a great troop of old folks, who congratulate themselves on the rare endowments of their offspring.

Our expedition is not led out in close columns, but is scattered into various groups between the gardens and the Indian quarters outside the village. The Indians always live together, and do not place their houses near the road, but plant them round with shrubbery and fruit-trees, so that the garden-hedge shall border upon the highway. By this means in places of mixed population it is easy to distinguish where the Indians dwell. Everywhere as we passed along to-day, inquisitive women were gazing after us, standing in their narrow garden-gateways with their crowds of children about them, who always conceal themselves when any one attempts to approach them.

As we step into the open fields, the shrubbery is green and gorgeous with the rich bloom of autumn. It is the compositae that unfold themselves in greatest abundance at this time of year, especially the eupatoria and sun-flowers. The maize-fields begin to turn yellow, and are swarmed by immense flocks of tortos (cassicus) and green parrots, which the thong of the keeper frightens away as often as they attempt their invasions.

Our way leads along over a green plain to an eminence covered with forest, behind which the heights rise up wild and steep into lofty mountains; a splendid sight, this bold outline against the clear blue sky. "We have chosen our day fortunately", remarked a countryman who was walking beside me; "this mildness and

quiet denote north-wind and rain. There was no dew upon the grass this morning, and the migratory ants were trooping from the valley towards the mountains; this indicates a change in the atmosphere. The shepherd-bird (a bird of prey, the pajaro vaquero) also screamed as I rode to the village early, and the cattle bellowed incessantly. "Well, let it rain to-morrow, since we can enjoy our festivities to-day with a propitious sky."

Our advance-guard had halted in order to join the party. Many of the company now met for the first time that day, and the same greetings, recognition, kissing and embracing took place that we are accustomed to see in the old countries of Europe. Our party consisted of the priest, a jolly-looking gentleman and general favourite, the vicar, still young with a countenance entirely Aztec, the judge and the Alcalde, the doctor and the apothecary, together with the under-prefect and the tax-gatherer, and a few merchants and peasants. The married men had their wives and daughters along with them; a few young beaux who had taken a course of etiquette in the city, dressed and trimmed in the height of fashion, played the agreeable to the amiable offspring of the judge, and clearly had the preference — The men talked of business-affairs, and especially of the election which was to come off the following Sunday; the younger portion of matters of pleasure, and the ladies of dress, and the merits of their neighbours. I joined a Mestizo family of my acquaintance, who took little interest in the proceedings of the party. "Why so far behind", I inquired of the two well grown sisters? "You are melancholy it seems because somebody is wanting, or you are envious perhaps, because the young gentlemen yonder bestow no attention upon you?" — "I should'nt know what to do with the puppets, replied the younger with a roguish look, "unless to put them with our loros (green parrots), that they might entertain each other." — "Heaven forbid!" said the elder sister, in that case we should not be able to hear our own words. Let them be where they are, so that the Señoritas may have no time to look over other people's heads." — "Aha! here then is the thorn?" I enquired. "You have little to fear on this account; the cedar might as well fear that the bisnaca (a short thick tree, the melocactus) should look down upon it. But have you grounds for your remark?" — "Grounds? Oh, we know that we are no Gachupinas*, but neither are we Indian girls, as this judge's lady called us, with such a contemptuous side-glance when speaking to her neighbour yonder. She shall find that out yet, for we have honour, though our complexions are not white."

I am acquainted with the prejudices in this respect, and know how much bitterness it awakens to call one an Indian who considers himself something better. My policy must therefore be a conciliatory one; I suggested a possible misunderstanding; — that the feeling of true honour must not allow itself to be disturbed by petty grievances; and still more soothing remedies of this sort, which appeared to act as palliatives, but yet could not effect a radical cure in the passionate disposition of the Mestizo-

* The Spaniards are called Gachupins.

In the social relations of European society the matter is not a whit better; is just as ridiculous and perhaps even more so, inasmuch as a higher degree of cultivation is taken for granted. Does it not often happen that a young man, who has been conversing with certain beautiful and accomplished girls, enquiring of some lady of his acquaintance who they are, receives with a peculiar turn of the nose the reply: Tailors' daughters! — Beautiful and accomplished? — "Conceited they may be no doubt, but their beauty is not discovered by every one." Or: "How finely has this man spoken, how nobly has he acted, who is he?" — "A converted Jew!" Nearly allied social absurdities or rather injustice, exist equally in the east and in the west.

We arrived at the appointed place without farther touching upon the irritable side. Tall oaks and plantains shaded a little spot of level ground at the foot of a high cliff, which formed a semicircle. In the middle of this half-circle the rock was cleft asunder, and out of the crevice flowed a clear fountain, that, forming itself into a rivulet, murmured along through the cool grove. The servants were already awaiting us with all sorts of provisions, and a jovial camp was pitched directly. A watch-fire was already burning to roast the meat on the spit, and to warm the tortillas; full flasks were cooling in the spring, and instead of standards the ladies waved their silk pocket-handkerchiefs from the branches. The seats for the ladies were arranged in a circle upon mats, with the provisions in the centre; the men stationed themselves behind the fair sex, and thus in the most cosy manner we began the battle upon chickens, turkies, tortillas, enchiladas (maize-bread with Spanish-pepper, meat and cheese) tamales* cakes and such like things. We men must provide the wine, the glasses went gaily round the circle, and toasts, serious and ludicrous were by no means lacking. When it came to my turn, I drank to the welfare of the republic, and added: "May its citizens, in equal zeal for the welfare of the land, show that they comprehend the equality which the land vouchsafes to us." I handed the glass to the indignant maiden with whom I had been talking upon the way who seized it quickly and without thinking exclaimed. "Long live brown America** that withstood the arrogance of foreigners, and always will withstand!" As she returned the glass she cast a contemptuous look towards Doña Pomposa, which would have served as tinder if attention had not accidentally been directed to something else.

At a rapid trot a young horseman came riding up, quickly dismounted and approached our circle, saluted us and called aside an elderly man of lean figure and somewhat gloomy aspect, who was sitting near the two clerical gentleman. From the violent gesticulation we could see, that the intelligence was of no indifferent

* Tamale is an Indian dish, a sort of dumpling of pounded maize, highly seasoned and commonly filled with meat. They are cooked rolled up in maize or banana leaves.

** America prieta, as the Spaniards derisively called the Guerilla bands of Mestizoes in the war of independence.

character. Directly the old man begged the priest for a moment's audience, and after a conversation of a few minutes, the former mounted the horse, with the young man behind, and galloped away in the direction of the village.

"We were beginning to fear", said the judge to the priest who had again joined us "that we should be obliged to lose your agreeable society, for we could form no other conjecture than that you were called away to some confession or other." — "Oh no", returned the other with a smile, "the confessions are managed without us, and for that matter the weddings too. While the good man who has just left was witnessing the cock-fight with us and accompanying us hither, some one has eloped with his daughter." — "Which one?" asked three ladies at the same instant. "The eldest, Dolores", replied the priest; "I never should have believed it of her, for I thought her elevated above all worldly thoughts."

A somewhat malicious expression was noticeable with the young ladies. They looked at each other and exchanged glances. My neighbour gave me an explanation. "Oh, I am glad," said she, "that this saint is unmasked. Lola was the worst devotee we had; she had some fault to find with all of us, and everything she knew, she took with her to the confessional." — "Was she at church to day?" asked I. "Oh yes, to be sure", replied she, "one of the last to go out, for I saw her from our window with another of the same stamp, who will turn out in precisely the same way, the hypocrite!"

It was now clear that I had also seen her after service, and that the laconic conversation of the two rancheros had reference to her. Accident afterwards brought me in contact with the parties, whom I found living in entire satisfaction, and reconciled with the old people. Many marriages take place in this way, but they do not by any means always receive the blessing of the church, although blessings of another sort are by no means wanting.

Among Mestizoes of the labouring class these wild marriages are very common, and public opinion does not condemn them, because the exorbitant church dues (four guineas) are chiefly the cause that the poorer people gladly leave the clergy out of the account.

The sun was sinking behind the mountains, and pouring a purple light over the snow-capped summits. It was time for us to break up, for the twilight of the tropics is short, and hardly a quarter of an hour after sunset, the stars begin to shine. A profound quiet lay upon the landscape, which the chirping and buzzing of the millions of crickets and grasshoppers, who were singing their evening song, rendered more profound; and the cheerful songs too of the maidens added no discord to the festal voices of nature. It was night as we entered the village, but the streets were still alive with groups of young people who were recounting the pleasures of the day, or singing to the notes of the guitar. They were improvising such bantering verses as these, and the day's history evidently formed the subject of them. Just as we were passing, we heard strophe and antistrophe.

THE ALAMEDA, PUBLIC WALK.

LA ALAMEDA, PASEO PUBLICO. (MEXICO.) DIE ALAMEDA, ÖFFENTLICHER SPAZIERGANG.

Darmstadt C. G. Lange

Maidens guard your breast from fire!
You will only seek in vain
To conceal the fatal flame.
Love that o'er your being ruleth,
Church nôr altar ever cooleth.

Church nor altar ever cooleth;
Even if you seek to pray,
Something drives the thought away.
But the saint your hearts adore,
Him you venture to implore.

"Whomsoever the god hath wounded is not likely to suffer for want of ridicule", said I to my fair neighbours, as I took leave. "Every saint must have his festival (a cada Sando llega su dia)", replied they, quoting a Spanish proverb.

Such was a Sunday among the Mestizoes of the village.

XV.

LIFE IN TOWN.

As the kind of foliage determines the physiognomy of the landscape, so do the cities bear the characteristic impress of a people's life and manners. The Mexican cities show at the first glance a common origin with the Romaic nations of southern Europe: straight streets, open squares, stone houses with flat roofs, numerous churches with glistening cupolas, far-extending citadel-like cloisters, mounts of Calvary, magnificent aqueducts like those of ancient Rome. — Splendour and luxury on the one hand, filth and nakedness on the other. The two Castiles have furnished the models; there as well as here we find the same lack of trees, the same absence of beautiful

parks and gardens, of cleanly and pleasant environs. But yet there is an important difference between European and American cities: the former have a history which extends back to the remotest times; the latter are modern, and their monuments are of yesterday. In the European cities the gates and walls, the churches and the fountains, the old town-hall and the castle with its towers and battlements, every alley and every house, every one of these is a leaf of the chronicle, a relic of the inmost life of the people. In America this has yet to be. The past belongs to another people whose monuments have been swept from the earth, whose history no one knows, for whose shrines no one has any sympathy. In Mexico no one knows where the unhappy Montezuma fell, pierced by the arrows of his own people, or where the statue of Tlaloc was worshipped; hardly any one can tell where the armed Alvarado leaped over the broad canal, or where Cortes' house was situated. But if in the capital of a great realm so few records remain of the past, what can we look for in other cities, where no great events transpired? We must therefore be content to leave our historical curiosity unsatisfied, and contemplate the cities as they are.

When one approaches a city of northern Europe, one sees the finest part first. The suburbs are new, splendid, tasteful, adorned with dépots, avenues and flower-gardens. In Mexico the suburbs are mean and dirty, and inhabited by the lowest classes. Refuse and filth, carcases of animals and rubbish of buildings are found piled up at the entrances of the streets, by the side of wretched hovels, the abode of ragged vagabonds or half naked Indians. Lean hungry dogs, flocks of auras and Zopilotes (carrion vultures) beleaguer these loathsome, neglected precincts, and we hasten our pace in passing, to withdraw both nose and eyes from the unpleasant impression. Upon the table-lands this is almost universally the case, but, on the contrary, in the cities of the eastern coast, Jalapa, Orizava and Cordova, for instance, the suburbs are a labyrinth of fruit gardens, from among which the red-tiled roofs of the cottages look forth with remarkable cheerfulness.

On entering the city proper, one finds the streets paved, and at the sides a raised foot-pavement of well-fitted basalt flags furnishes an agreeable walk for the pedestrian. Most of the cities have broad straight streets, which cross at right angles. The houses of the wealthier people are of two, three or more stories, those of the humbler classes, in the majority of instances, only one. The architecture is Spanish, but the numerous churches are all in the French and Italian style of the seventeenth century. Many of them are imposing in extent, many have, in the interior, great simplicity and beauty of proportion, and since they are all of stone with vaulted roofs and lofty domes, they produce an impression of solemnity corresponding with their design.

First of all let us stroll out into the principal square, for this is always the grand focus of splendour in all Mexican cities. The great church always occupies one side of the stately quadrangle; the three remaining are composed of large houses whose lower story consists of broad colonnades running from end to end.

In these arcades are to be found the finest shops, warehouses, wine and coffee-houses. The building opposite the church is invariably the city-hall, or in chief towns the capitol. A beautiful fountain, or a column usually decorates the centre of the square, and many are also ornamented with rows of trees, which trees afford an agreeable promenade. In the smaller towns the weekly market is generally held in the principal square, which then offers a very lively picture by the contrast of its groups of people, and the multifarious wares exposed for sale. One could hardly see a finer sight for instance, than the market at Cordova, in the state of Vera Cruz, offers on a clear Friday morning. One should choose a point of observation on the east side of the church. Here one overlooks the fine square surrounded by its stately portico. The vendors fill the whole area, arranging themselves in long rows like regular streets, so that articles of one kind can be found together. Whites and Indians, Mestizoes, mulattoes and negroes, all cleanly dressed, crowd themselves together, a medley of every colour. Nowhere can be found such a mixture of different coloured faces as here, just upon the boundary between the temperate and torrid regions. In addition to this animated scene, we are surrounded by a splendid tropical landscape. Tall palm-trees and great-leaved bananas are waving in the mild air, and the stern masses of the mountains of Orizava, rising up with their cones of glittering snow, constitute the back-ground.

The public square (plaza) is to the Mexican what the forum was to the Roman. Every event is first heard of there, every festivity whether of state or church is to be witnessed upon the plaza. There elections take place and public speeches are made, the gensd'armes are mustered and fire-works and brilliant illuminations are displayed, and there under a gorgeous canopy the procession of Corpus-Christi is held. Before or after church-service, the people take a little walk under the arcades, here they loiter at evening in order to meet acquaintances, to hear the news or do business; and it is a legitimate part of every citizen's life once a day to smoke his cigar in these halls. The head-quarters too of Hades are naturally here. Here, as we have already remarked, the town-hall is invariably situated, as well as the court of justice, the offices of numerous lawyers and of the public notaries. Shops, coffee and drinking-houses are moreover the magnets which everywhere exercise their power of attraction. The noble profession of loungers and idlers is here finely represented; the leperos or lazzaroni of the cities are driven hither by instinct, because opportunity most readily offers itself of procuring something without great exertion, whether it be by relieving some one's pockets, or the more honourable method of doing some errand; porters or such-like evangelists* recline against the pillars and communicate their oracles, muleteers seek for return freight, dealers in all sorts of trinkets carry about their finery in their hands, and praise it to the pretty Chinas (Mestizo girls), who gaze with bewitched eyes at the ear-rings and necklaces. A class of men that is never wanting, is a set of good-for-nothing fellows of Creole

* See Section X.

blood; spoiled sons of Spanish parents, who are too lazy and too proud to earn their bread by the sweat of the brow, who are able to dabble a little with the pen, who outdo Roscius himself in volubility, and who lounge about the wine and coffee-houses, in order by some means to get the country-people, who are seeking an advocate, into their net and systematically fleece them. Interesting fellows, these pettifoggers, of whom with others of the same faith, I intend to speak more at length hereafter.

In the larger towns, especially in the capital, take good care of your watch and purse under the porticoes, and also look after your pocket-handkerchief, otherwise it may easily pass into the hands of some one else.

The main streets of the city always lead from the public square. These are decorated with the finest houses, and inhabited by the wealthiest people. Here in the forenoon the liveliest trade is carried on; the public officials are hastening to their bureaux, the merchants to their counting-houses; brokers are making their rounds in the business world, and the equipage of the physician stops before the grandest houses. Whole trains of mules are bringing in or taking away all manner of goods. Caravans of asses are dragging along skins filled with pulque, and trains of Indians are trotting along with their burdens to the vegetable market or fruit-stalls. We are continually meeting monks of all colours, some of whom are walking about the market, others about the begging grounds, seculars are going leisurely to their churches, stopping now and then to greet each other, and students in long gowns and caps are proceeding to lecture. The ladies in dresses of black silk, and laced mantillas over the head, are all on the way to mass; their step is very measured and solemn, but the beautiful eyes understand nevertheless how to return from under their long eyelashes the silent salutation which meets them from the balcony.

Vendors of all sorts are shouting their wares at the top of their voice, and bawling out the final syllable with a long-drawn tone. Here a baker-boy is crying his 'pan fresco, tres tortas por medio', yonder a stout lad with a portable stove upon his head is praising his 'patos fritos, patos grandes (great roasted wild ducks)' which he offers to the hungry purchaser smoking hot. Indian women with fruits or vegetables are reciting with shrill voice a whole litany of the things they carry; shoes, cloths, newspapers, pamphlets, in short every conceivable thing is offered here for public sale. One often sees cows standing in the middle of the street. These furnish the milk, and their masters make it a matter of convenience to milk them at the doors of the different customers. In the warm season the cry of 'nieve, nieve' is heard in all the streets. These are the ice-carriers with great tin cans on their heads, who for a small sum are ready to refresh the thirsty. Others are calling 'aqua fresca' and skilfully balancing on the hand a plate with filled glasses. The confectioner is sure to be somewhere near, who well knows that nothing relishes better than a tart with a sweet draught.

The booths of the artisans all stand open, so that from the street one can look into their workshops and witness their various kinds of activity. The tailors always

work with open doors, sitting upon low stools, and they often come out on to the pavement when it is not sufficiently light within. The shoemakers and saddlers do the same, and as matter for gossip is never wanting, they fail not to avail themselves of it, and pass as tattlers. The tinmen, copper and silversmiths also work with open doors, but the noise of the hammer and file do not allow them the same facilities for making their gossiping remarks. Silver-workers are found in every village, and as a matter of course still more in the cities, because the thousand little ornaments in requisition are not yet furnished by the manufactories, and also because people like them of solid gold or silver. It is a peculiarity of the Mexican, that he does not want a thing at all unless he can have the very best. This is most clearly seen in trade. Heavy gold watches always find a ready sale, while cheap silver ones are entirely unsaleable. It is only the fine woollen cloths that find a market, the cheaper and coarser do not go at all. If one cannot afford silk stockings, none at all are worn, and the shreds of a silken girdle are looked upon with more complacency than one of cotton, however new.

From early morning till mid-day the bells are never weary. The numerous churches and convents make it a point of honour to keep the air in perpetual vibration by their metallic voices, not always to the entire edification of our tympanums. The ringing moreover is different from that in Europe; not the solemn regular tolling, for the smaller bells are turned completely over upon their axle, while the larger are not moved at all, but the rope is fastened to the tongue which is thus beaten against the metal in irregular time. Upon great festivals this fearful jargon is by no means to be considered pleasant. However it is not peculiar to Mexico alone, for in Europe I have also experienced it in equal perfection.

In the large cities of Mexico numerous convents are found, for men as well as women; in the smaller towns few, in the villages none at all. The brotherhood have always understood remarkably well how to select their abodes advantageously, as the Johannisberg and other fine abbeys testify. The Mexican monks are no ascetic dunces, who choose the desert for their dwelling-place, or allow themselves to be eaten up by the Apachas. In the larger cities there is comfortable living; one finds good society there, begging is a matter of less difficulty, and a wider field of activity offers itself to allow the gentle influence of the church to produce its effect upon the hearts of believers. In Puebla nearly half the landed property belongs to the cloisters. Moreover it lies in the organization of many of the orders, for instance the Franciscan, reciprocally to keep watch upon each other. "Oh, you have no idea" said once my old friend Fray Eufrasio, himself a Franciscan, what intriguing is carried on behind our cloister walls. I have filled the higher dignities of my order. I was guardian and provincial; I know the matter well, and I assure you, the cabals of the court, the intrigues of diplomacy are but child's play in comparison with the intrigues within our convents; and whoever has proved himself a master here, need not fear that his shrewdness will fail him elsewhere. At the election of superiors every lever is set in motion, and therefore it suits our pur-

pose to have our cloisters in the cities, and not in the desert, that we may have the means of penetrating the secrets of others."

There is to be sure a missionary order (San Jose de Gracia of the rule of St. Francis) whose duty it is to preach the Gospel to the wild tribes on the northern borders of the country, but as this is attended with dangers and a thousand privations, most of the fathers prefer in the propogation of the faith to take charge of the inner mission in the bosom of populous cities.

As accident has now led us to the cloisters, we will avail ourselves of this opportunity to look about us a little. The buildings are usually of extraordinary extent, and within the great square which they embrace, include churches, chapels, archways, courts and gardens. Although the rules of the order do not allow the cells of the monks to be spacious or splendid, yet wealth and magnificence are found in whatever belongs to the fraternity. In many cloisters the passages are exceedingly fine, the refectory, library and other common apartments decorated with taste or ornamented with good pictures; but it is the churches and chapels above all, which, in vestments, sacred vessels, statues, candlesticks etc. possess enormous treasures. Many of the ancient ornaments of massive gold and silver it is true took their departure as Santa Anna threatened to stretch out his greedy hand towards the inalienable goods of the church. At that time heavy loads of silver altar-plate, railings, candelabras and statues, in many cases of rare workmanship, went monthly to Vera Cruz to be exported by the English packets. The pretence was, that these injured, antiquated articles were now to be exchanged in Europe for modern ones. Many new ones came back indeed, but all of plated brass and German-silver, while the heavy masses of precious metal were lent to the Bank of England or elsewhere by the generals of the order. This exportation had lasted some time when Santa Anna discovered and forbade it on penalty of confiscation. The importance of these cloister treasures notwithstanding, may be judged of from the fact that in the war with the United States in 1847 the convent of Guadalupe near Mexico alone advanced a million and a half of dollars towards defraying the expenses of the outfit.

With most of the orders the restraint is not very great and the discipline tolerably lax, consequently we find many dainty livers under the hair shirt, who have their well-arranged private dwellings outside the cloister.

In the police reports of the capital, instances are given every week of monks being found in the gaming-houses and other infamous dens by the gensd'armes in their rounds, and brought to the watch-house. They are delivered over to their cloisters early in the morning, unless they have implicated themselves in some criminal affair, and nothing further is heard about it. But woe to him who ventures to act in opposition to his superiors within the convent, or to play the informer. For such a one, as a man of this position himself informed me, life becomes a burden. Can one endure greater ignominy than to lie for instance (and this actually takes place), upon the threshold of the refectory while the rest are banquet-

ting, and to be stepped upon by every one who passes in and out; or with bit in mouth to be tied up in a stable to the manger and fed with barley only!

The number of convents in the entire land amounts to about 140 for females, with a population of 2000 monks and 1900 nuns. The Franciscans constitute tho majority; the Carmelites and Mercedarians are the fewest, although the latter have very considerable possessions. A part of the monks are occupied with works of mercy, for instance those connected with the lunatic asylums in the cloisters of San Hipolito, and the hospitals in the cloisters of San Juan de Dios and San Lazero. The sisters of charity also occupy themselves with the care of the sick. In many parishes the rites of worship are administered by monks, as in Taluca by the Franciscans, but in general their lives are confined to the exercise of their devotions. The secular clergy are not specially gracious towards them, and take it ill in the highest degree when missionaries wish to visit their parishes. Their opinions are shared by many of the people, who hold the abolishing of many of these institutions for a measure which the times demand. Yet nothing of the kind has been done, because they can come to no agreement about the disposal of the property. The secular power claims it for the public treasury (after the precedent of Napoleon, whom the Rhenish League, so willingly imitated), but the clergy naturally claim it for the church, and as the apple of discord might produce great strife in the family, it has hitherto been left unmolested.

Whoever visits the capital of Mexico, should not neglect to bestow some attention upon the principal cloisters; the imposing effect of the buildings will alone repay the trouble. The convent of the Blue Franciscans embraces an entire quarter, and has fine churches within its gates. Many wealthy families have their burial vaults in these churches; this not only brings in a rich income for the masses which are read for the dead, but also many a rich legacy. Hence it becomes possible for begging monks to exhibit a palace large enough for a royal citadel.

At another, time courteous reader, allow yourself to be conducted by a talkative lay brother through the spacious halls and pleasant gardens surrounded by buildings, which for several years an assiduous German named Kübli has rented, and who there carries on an important business as market-gardener. At present, however, we will follow the throng of people who are hastening at a rapid pace towards the chief square. The roar of cannon from the national palace and the ringing of the cathedral bells announce some important ceremony, which we must not neglect. We find ourselves in the broad and beautiful street of San Francisco, which leads from the promenade (paseo nuevo) to the great square. If one enters the city from the west, through the gate of San Cosme one passes through a very long street, which is divided throughout the whole length by the arches of the great aqueduct, to the Alameda, a little park within the city, surrounded by an iron railing, and attractive for its fountains, plots of flowers and shady walks of over-arching foliage. From this green oasis the two beautiful streets Calle de Tacuba and Calle de San Francisco lead to the centre of the city. The latter in the vicinity of the square is called the Silver-

smiths' street, which with its multitude of splendid shops, as well as customers and sight-seers, presents a very animated appearance, and is regarded as the first street of the capital.

As we enter the unusually large square, we have opposite us on the east the national palace, which embraces an entire side of the parallelogram. On the left stands the great cathedral, upon the spot where the great temple of the god of war saw its countless human victims bleed. The chief portal is towards the square, which is separated by pillars and chains from another square shaded by acacias, and properly called the cathedral square. On the two remaining sides of the quadrangle are palaces with arcades. One of them is the senate house (la diputacion), opposite the cathedral and on either side of this stand the archiepiscopal palace, and the former dwelling of Cortes the Conqueror (casa del estado). Within the circuit of this immense square was once concentrated the highest splendour of the Aztec empire. Here stood the pyramid of Huiziliposchtli which overlooked the highest pinnacles of the city and bore upon its spacious platform the huge idol-towers; here surrounding the temple were far-extending palaces which served as dwellings for more than a thousand priests, and adjoining these, were the cloister-like schools for both sexes. Here finally rose the splendid citadel of the rulers, where a small army of attendants, officers and warriors found room. A single stone of this splendid structure is still to be seen, a great round block of porphyry walled into the north-west corner of the Cathedral, and representing in deeply-cut figures the Aztec calender.

Where formerly from the platform of the pyramid the big drum of the war-god sent forth its dismal tones, the grave tolling of the bells in two stately towers is now heard. A battalion of grenadiers is drawn up before the palace, a considerable crowd surges backwards and forwards in the square, whilst the organ peals through the lofty aisles of the cathedral, and the "ite missa est" is followed by the Amen of the choir. The gates are thrown open, and in solemn procession issues from the sacred building the President of the Republic in the uniform of a general, accompanied by the ministers and a brilliant staff, in addition to the diplomatic agents of friendly powers, who are always invited to these festivals. Two beadles with long talars and silver sceptres open the procession of deputies of the senate and congress, headed by their president, followed by the alcaldes, the judges, the prelates, the generals and the superior civil officers. Accompanied by regimental music, the procession repairs to the great festal-hall of the palace, which is tastefully, even splendidly adorned. At the northern end, on a raised floor, furnished with a carpet, is the chair of the president, in front of a red velvet drapery, with the arms of the republic embroidered in gold. On either side, somewhat lower, the secretaries of state are seated. The seats of the deputies form a vast semi-circle opposite the president's chair, behind which are the boxes for the diplomatists and guests. A gallery, supported by pillars, is reserved for the public. The hall is adorned with portraits of the American heroes; the portrait of Humboldt is also exhibited, for he

it was who with the pen did more towards attaining the liberty of the country, than others with the sword. Humboldt is an honorary citizen of the capital.

As soon as the honourable assembly is seated, the president rises and reads his message, that is to say, a summary of the results of his presidentship, a review of the position of the country, both in regard to home and foreign politics, and a list of the objects, which require the immediate attention of the legislature. A detailed account of the state of the finances will be laid before the chambers by the ministers. As usual the address concludes with a compliment to the honourable deputies, remarking that the country had never better reason to anticipate that beneficial laws would be promulgated, than during the ensuing session, where men of such distinguished capacity etc. etc. The compliment is naturally returned by the chambers, on which the session is declared to have commenced. A few greenhorns in the galleries are possessed with the innocent notion that the fine speeches are to be taken literally, and shout with stentorian lungs: "Viva la republica, viva el sobrano congreso." In Europe we know better how such oratorical displays are to be interpeted, and spare our breath.

For the first day the farce is at an end, and we can go; but let us first cast an eye over the groups, in order to carry away with us an idea of the whole. Did we not here and there perceive in the galleries a brawny individual of the inferior classes, of brown complexion, and in the picturesque costume of the country, we might deem ourselves in a South-European capital. Here and there, the outward forms are nearly the same: the soldier and the priest in their respective uniforms, the remainder of the civilized portion of the community in black dress-coat, and with the crush-hat under the arm; the consuls in naval uniform; in short, all according to the European cut. The deputies are collected in groups, according to their politics. The comfortable old gentlemen there, have evidently battled through many a session and are here quite at home. They salute the president, speak a few words with the ministers, shake hands with an old acquaintance, and casually glance at the new members. These are men of the old régime, men of a former generation, conservatives, well-informed, and well-meaning ancient fogies, who have always been opposed to sweeping reform; men who are opposed to railways, because carriers would lose by them; and who oppose the introduction of gas, because they themselves cultivate oil, or possess large *flocks of sheep.**

The group of young men gesticulating so powerfully in the middle of the hall, consists of lawyers, physicians, government-officials, and landed proprietors from the provinces. You see at once that they are men of progress and prepared to oppose the fat old gentlemen. Some of them have acquired experience in foreign countries, and know that many inveterate abuses must be remedied, before the republic can

* In sheep-breeding the principal object is to procure tallow. Great quantities of tallow are used in the country, candles being invariably burnt in the mines.

prosper; and labour therefore energetically for the reforms the country stands so much in need of.

A small minority, with several military men amongst them, standing there to the right, near the pillar, are Santanists, *parvenus* dating from the era of the military dictatorship, morally at the very lowest ebb. They would gladly smuggle back their banished leader, in order that the days of their *golden* age might return.

The gentlemen there in black robes (secular priests, for monks are not eligible) have a strong party, and keep to it more consistently than all the others. Priests may also be observed in the other groups, for many of them entertain the most liberal opinions; but those we have called attention to, represent the strict clerical party, and oppose every innovation, fearing that *their* interests might otherwise be endangered, and property change hands. It is the Spanish party, who still secretly adhere to the aristocracy, which has long since been abolished and forgotten by the people; the monarchical party, supported by Spanish and Franco-Bourbon intrigue, and provided with several Jesuitical abbés. Their ideal is: a Spanish or French prince on the throne of the Aztecs. They hate the Santanists, but are frequently hand and glove with them, when the object is to defeat a motion of the republicans. Interest often enables them to bring the old constitutionalists over to their side, whom we have already alluded to as conservatives, or rather conservators — of their wealth and places. The monarchical party is small, and would long since have ceased to exist, had it not been supported by a class, who, while possessed of great influence, are cunning enough to conceal their real plans.

These are the chief parties we are able to recognize in the assembly of deputies; and at every fresh meeting of congress they are reorganized and recruited. The Santanists are at present hardly worthy of consideration; in reality there are only two great parties; the republican and the hierarchical-monarchical. In the new world as in the old one, the same great questions are constantly being agitated.

The majority of the Mexican population interest themselves little enough for public affairs. Two thirds of the people consist of Indians or labouring Mestizoes, who are wholly indifferent to politics. They take part, however, in the elections, because they are fond of exercising their right. The elections are indirect, and moreover double. Every citizen has the right of voting, that is to say, every man who has completed his twentieth year, who is independent (not in service as labourer, domestic servant, or clerk), who has been convicted of no crime, is not a notorious gambler etc. The elective sections are formed where the population numbers five hundred souls at least. Each section chooses an elector. In the chief town of the canton the electors meet, and choose according to the amount of the population one or two cantonal-electors, who, in the principal city of the individual states, elect the deputies for the general congress in the proportion of 1 to 50,000 souls. By this threefold mode of election, the intrigues which might easily arise in many places, are in a great measure neutralized, and the elections are mostly in accordance with the desires of the people.

The constitution is in the main like that of the United States. It is a federal republic, consisting of twenty states, three territories and the federal district. The legislative power of the union is exercised by the chambers, which constitute the congress and senate. The senate, half of whom are chosen from the congress, half from the assembly of the separate states, revise and confirm the laws which have passed the congress. Should they reject a law, the subject is not to be brought forward again the same session, that is to say, not till the beginning of the following year.

At the head of the government is the president with his responsible ministry, who commands the forces, concludes treaties with other nations etc. The administration of justice is separated from the executive power; two instances are in the states, the superior court of judicature for the whole republic is in the capital.

The individual states have their special congress and their administration. The constitution of the states is confirmed by the general congress. The receipts and expenditure of the whole republic are determined exclusively by the general congress which has to decide on all matters appertaining to the general interest, and permits the individual states to attend to the further development of the local interests merely.

I had no intention here of analysing the constitution, but simply of presenting some of the features, in order that the notes might be spared, which would otherwise be necessary for comprehending many of the expressions. We now return to the festal-hall of the palace; but the session being closed, and the members all streaming forth, renders it impossible to continue our physiognomical studies. At the doors we greet some deputies of our acquaintance, and it being early, accept their invitation to drink a glass of beer with them in the Gran Sociedad. "Well, and how do your European friends here like our city, our hall of congress? It's not so bad, I imagine; and might even pass for something in Europe!" remarked Mr. A. the clever Licensiado (advocate). Every nation is vain; and we may therefore forgive the lively Creoles for feeling themselves flattered when Europeans praise their public institutions. Many even believe that nothing superior to their capital and all it contains can be met with. True, it is a handsome city, but there is much room for improvement. Of this later: let us now look round in the coffee-house, where many people are seated at the marble tables, some conversing, others absorbed in the newspapers; others again are occupied with chess or dominoes. The opening of congress naturally forms the chief topic of conversation, in addition to the results of the elections, the probable majority, the tactics of parties, the most important motions to be put, and so on.

"Nothing sensible will come of it", said a man at the next table, whose marked features had struck us on entering. "Nothing sensible will come of it", said he, stroking his coal-black moustache, which, installed beneath his aquiline nose, was almost an ell in length, "for the priests and law-twisters will chatter like magpies,

and know about as much what is wanted as my poodle. There are not three military men of any talent in the chambers, and as long as the military does not occupy another position, all is good for nothing." Once more he strokes his beard, and takes a hearty draught from his foaming glass.

"Well spoken captain", ironically replied our neighbour the advocate; "it certainly is a crying wrong not to have elected a man of your merit. Your profession is unpardonably neglected, and is sadly in want of good soles, which are somewhat worn by running from the Yankees. The people still think of the happy days when the military budget devoured four-fifths of the whole revenue, to support an army that was useless against the foreign foe, and unable to maintain tranquillity in the country itself, seeing that they alone were the cause of all dissensions. Even the security of the high-roads could not be entrusted to the troops; for your heroes made common cause with the robbers, were never there when the travellers were attacked, but as soon as the prey was in safety, they well knew where their share was to be sought."

"Oh! you saints", retorted he of the moustache; "and how is it with you? When the brave soldiers have succeeded in capturing the robbers, they apply to you with a well-filled purse, and you let them off scot-free, quite according to law; or when the custom-house official has cheated the revenue of enormous sums, and merited the gallows, you prove, in return for a thumping fee, that the poor man has completely sacrificed himself for the good of the state, and is noway culpable, all according to law; or if a rebel who has betrayed the constitution, and who every one acknowledges has richly deserved the honourable distinction of the iron collar* privately favours you with certain hints, you know how to make it appear, that the rogue has acted from pure patriotism and is perfectly innocent, all according to law; or if — —"

"Dios santo, captain", shouts the licentiate, "spare our ears and your lungs; your delightful voice might otherwise be sadly injured and a compression of the larynx be brought on, and when it comes to the push leave you in the lurch. Consider that you will soon be a colonel, especially if they get wind of your parliamentary talent. Thence it is but a step to become minister of war, and then you will have it all your own way. But joking aside, fancy you had already attained the distinction, how could you with our shattered finances restore the army, how could you form an efficient body of officers?"

"Money", returned the captain; "I'd soon have that. The lawyers should procure it for me, and should there still be a deficit, I'd take it from the church. I swear to you, that with the sixty millions of piastres, which the monks are worth, I

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* The iron collar refers to the garotte. An iron ring, attached to a post, is passed round the neck, and suddenly tightened by a powerful screw. This is a privilege enjoyed by the Spanish nobility.

would raise a corps as superb as Napoleon's old guard; and if I paid the officers well, who now have precisely enough to keep them from famishing, they would regain sufficient strength to entertain honourable feelings without losing their balance. We could take our choice, and there is no want of excellent material."

The faces of the listeners indicated the amusement the conversation afforded them, although an occasional hint was thrown out by some of them, that it might be adviseable to cease, lest the strangers present should believe that matters really were in so desperate a condition. The captain comprehending what was required, turned to us, and enquired with much urbanity (for the Mexicans are polished in manner, and invariably highly attentive to their guests) how we liked the country, the city, and whether he could perhaps be of use to us in visiting the curiosities. Being already well acquainted with the place, I was able to decline his offer with thanks; but the man pleasing me, I said that it would afford me infinite satisfaction to be admitted frequently to his very agreeable society. "I am always at your service", he returned, "you will find me here or on the promenades daily, and mayhap I shall be able to tell you much, that you will not easily find in the guide-books." We parted excellent friends, after having received from all an invitation to dine with them — a mark of attention that is rarely omitted.

I have introduced my readers to this society, in order that they may obtain some idea of public affairs. Such speeches, however, are only heard amongst acquaintances; for the Mexicans are here discreet, and are not fond of speaking out of school — a laudable custom, not always met with in Europe, among the Germans especially, who not unfrequently fall foul of their country when in a foreign land. Having once looked behind the curtains, we may venture to add that neither the lawyer nor the officer were altogether wrong. The judges have often been reproached with bribery; the public journals have frequently recorded the fact, and sometimes I have had opportunities of remarking it myself. The reproach applies less to the judges, than to the clerks and subalterns, and the judges are chiefly to blame for not keeping their subordinates under stricter control. The flight of criminals frequently occurs, and usually it may be attributed to some clerk who has been bribed. We shall allude somewhat later to military affairs.

It is impossible to become accurately acquainted with a town, unless one lounges through the streets at all hours of the day, and observes the proceedings of the people. The usual dinner-time of all classes is between two and four o'clock in the afternoon. This is the quietest time in the streets; every one is housed, many shops and warehouses are closed, and even the day-labourer has an hour to himself, which he devotes to smoking his cigarito, and enjoying a nap. On Sundays only are the streets animated at this hour, partly owing to the numerous country-people who visit the town, partly owing to the promenaders, who start early to the neighbouring villages. The dinners at the hotels offer nothing remarkable, and are sufficiently European; but in many of the inferior houses one sees on the ground-floor smoky places, where queer cookery is going on. As the street-doors stand wide open, earthen vessels are

observed on huge fires, in which bubble red broth and black beans. Crowds of people flock in and out of a little apartment near the kitchen; mule-drivers in their leather collars, rancheros, soldiers, labourers etc. These are feeding establishments termed *fondas* (eating-houses), for the lower classes, where for a real, about sixpence, a meal may be had, including a large glass of pulque.

Usually other dingy abodes are close by, in which whole rows of brown women, the upper part of the body quite naked, or but indifferently covered, kneel on the floor, and crush maize on flat stones, whilst others prepare the mass with their hands for tortillas, and bake them in flat earthen pans. Precisely the people who are cramming in the neighbouring cook-shops, object to wheaten bread; the tortilla is absolutely necessary for them, and in point of fact, it is more palatable than bread with the highly-spiced ragouts and the frigoles (beans).

Dinner is got through without knives and forks, the table-cloth is none of the whitest, and the napkins acquire a peculiar colour from the ragouts, and smell not exactly of *eau de mille fleurs*, but make you sneeze, consequent on their being so strongly impregnated with capsicum. The diners of this quarter have a singular habit, *viz*: after the meal (which always concludes with something sweet, though it be but a morsel of raw sugar) they drink a large glass of water, cross themselves with the words "bendito y alabado sea Dios", and then with open mouth and much noise allow the stomachic gas to explode, which is modulated with a certain degree of virtuosity, if the expression may be allowed. The common people deem the practice very wholesome, and even those occupying a higher position do not disdain it, at all events *en famille*, especially the villager and small tradesman. Don Quixote orders his page not to speak of it; but does not forbid the practice.

Many of the people take their meals in the street, and then enjoy their siesta. Bricklayers, masons, paviours, porters etc. have their dinner brought them, and now sit with wife and children on some raised portion of the foot-pavement, or on the steps of a church, and appear to relish their food as much as if they were reclining on a Roman triclinium. Different groups even bring their dsihes to the same spot, and thus effect greater variety. What compliments they pay each other about the excellent manner in which the viands are prepared! "Really, Doña Mariquita", says a not over clean bricklayer's labourer, "you know how to prepare the most delicate tid-bits, better than any one in the city; it is delicious to eat of this dish." — "You flatter me (favor que Vmd. me hace)" replies the person addressed, "my husband reproaches me, that I never prepare such good things for him as your lady, Doña Camilla cooks" etc. These people treat each other with a degree of politeness, as if they had studied it in drawing-rooms. We who come from the north are surprised at the small quantity of food these hard-working people require. A stout English countryman would devour at one sitting what would suffice a whole family of Mexicans for the day.

The last groups we glanced at belong to the class of the Mestizoes, who constitute in great measure the inferior part of the population in the cities. The

actual Indians form separate communities in the suburbs, and differ but little from their fellows in the villages. Where they depend on agriculture they are independent after their fashion; in the capital itsel , the Indians at the extremities of the city carry on the same occupation as their forefathers at the time of the conquest by the mightier tribes of the Acolhuas and Tepauecos; they seek a subsistence in the swamps and lakes and on their sterile shores. Like the herons they are seen wading in the ditches which transect the swamps, catching with their little nets white-fish, frogs and acholotes, that strange Proteus-species, forming the connecting link between fish and lizard. In small canoes they row along the broad canals and sedgy lakes, collecting fish and frog-spawn, flies' eggs, water-cresses and water-lilies, or chase the aquatic birds and sand-pipers, which cover the lakes and their shores in incredible numbers. In addition to this they plait reed-mats, boil salt from the water of the salt-lakes, increasing their store by repeatedly washing saline earths, or collecting natron *tequesquite* in the fields, which flourishes after the rainy season. Their little gardens, which they reclaim from the swamp, produce good vegetables and flowers; these chinampas are said once to have been floating, but at present they are aground, because the lakes have become smaller. All these little articles of commerce and many more*, they convey to the market of Tlaltelolco, which three centuries since — when Cortes first marched into the capital of the Aztecs — was so large, that 30,000 persons traded there daily. These Indians of the capital are for the most part poor and dirty. When their traffic is ended, and a few glasses of pulque have somewhat roused them from their torpidity, they are often seen located in the shade of a high wall or of a church, consuming the remainder of their *itacate* (provision carried with them in a net). Stale maize-bread (totopo), boiled beans wrapped in leaves, or little salt-fish with Spanish pepper, constitute their simple meal; and be the sun ever so high they take their siesta on the bare ground. The hours from 2 till 4 are, as already observed, the quietest in the cities; the streets are deserted, the inhabitants are occupied with the process of digestion, or peaceably smoking their cigar. Even the tedious loungers seek the shade, until the cool evening calls forth more activity, and about six o'clock the streets have as busy an appearance as in the forenoon.

All Mexican cities are built according to certain rules, unless the nature of the ground render it absolutely impossible. As the streets cross each other at right angles, square blocks of houses are formed, which stand close together, and thus have the appearance of a compact mass. Each side of this square is 200 *varas* or 600 feet long, and the square of forty thousand square *varas* is called a Mansana. Each Mansana chooses annually from its inhabitants a justice of the peace and a police-inspector, who have to arrange the trifling quarrels and disturbancees. A number of Mansanas, ecclesiastically considered, form a parish, politically a quarter, which is represented in the town-council.

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* They sell maize variously prepared, fowls, living sand-pipers, humming-birds in little cages of grass, earthenware, baskets, toys of wood or feathers, gourds, string, tape etc.

The town-council (ayuntamiento) is chosen by the people, and consists of burgomasters (alcaldes) and regidores, who have to attend to the management of the municipal funds, to education, the police, building-matters, lighting etc. The elections take place annually, and can only be rejected on legal grounds; refusing to accept the election without cause may produce a suspension of the rights of citizenship. An immediate re-election may be declined. The chiefs of the quarter and mansanas are subject to the authority of the town-council. All municipal offices must be undertaken gratuitously; the clerks and inferior officials are of course paid.

In the police arrangements are great desiderata, which are more apparent to the European than to the natives. True, care is taken that the town is provided with water, that the market is well supplied with provisions (in most towns are fruit-markets and slaughter-houses), that the prices are regulated, weights and measures correctly observed. The streets are kept clean, the lighting is pretty good, and after sunset the watchmen (*serenos*) with spear and lantern are at every street-corner. The cemeteries are removed without the walls, hospitals are there for the reception of the poor, and a thousand things besides are attended to. Strict control is, however, wanting. The police have not yet succeeded in suppressing the demoralizing games of hazard, in compelling the idle *lepero* to work, in quickly detecting thieves and cheats and handing them over to the authorities, in preventing the disgraceful scenes with the drunken Indians, and hindering the lower classes from carrying short arms, the source of so much bloodshed. The rabble are in the habit of carrying a knife in their belt or in their riding-boots, and should a dispute occur, the knife is always ready to afford strong conviction. The law threatens these matters with severe penalties, but little is done towards carrying the laws into effect. Thus it is in many things; every one knows the grievance, but impunity is so general, that nobody ventures to interfere, for fear of acquiring universal odium. The yearly change of the municipal authorities contributes materially to this state of affairs remaining thus neglected: and every one seeks to get through his year of office as quietly as possible, and to leave to his successor the reform of all that is objectionable, who, in his turn acts in the same manner.

When the setting sun nears the horizon, the streets of the city become animated with all those who are desirous of breathing the fresh air. In carriages, on horseback and on foot the Alamedas are visited, those simple avenues of trees, which are expected to afford shade. Here one sees and is seen; the young dandies salute the fair girls in their carriages, or offer their hand to conduct them to the park. Appointments are made for the evening; at the theatre, at the tertulla, at the gambling-house, they agree to meet. There is as much bustle as at the market-place, the children run shouting backwards and forwaprs, all is hum and noise, when at the approach of twilight the sound of a bell is heard from the great tower of the city, succeeded by the bells from all the other steeples. As if by magic, all motion is arrested, all the pedestrians halt, all the men uncover, many lips pronounce an Ave Maria; a second and a third stroke resound, and when the last has ceased to vibrate,

life returns to the multitude. Before the men have replaced their hats, they wish their acquaintances good evening; even at home this is done after the vesper-bell has rung; nor would the domestics as much as bring a light into the room without wishing good evening. I must here remark, that in Spanish America, as in Spain, the people wish each other good day (*buenos dias*), from the early morning till noon, from noon till twilight, good evening (*buenas tardes*), and afterwards, good night (*buenas noches*). The time of day is always employed in the plural.

When the "oracion", or evening bell has rung, all hasten back to the city, where the streets are filled with people sauntering leisurely up and down; we join the throng, and with them respire the pleasant evening air. Suddenly a little bell is heard: "nuestro amo" is whispered on all sides, many hasten their steps and pass into the by-streets. It is a priest with the host, seated in a carriage drawn by two white horses, and the coachman is one of the notabilities of the town, of the guild of "the coachmen of Our Lord." Chorister boys precede him with lanterns on staves, and where the little bell sounds, all in the street or in the balconies kneel; if it be night, lights are placed in the windows. In the country towns this is still customary, in the capital and in the sea-ports Lucifer has effected great changes; the coachman's guild is in want of recruits, and many of the passengers become hard of hearing when the little bell is rung. Were He who governs the universe not infinitely more patient than his ministers here below, many of the cities, like Sodom, had long since disappeared from the earth.

It not unfrequently happens, that the shock of an earthquake is felt; and when the mighty volcanic throbs shake the foundations to their centre, threatening to overthrow man's feeble works, all rush forth into the streets, into the squares, cast themselves into the dust and supplicate for mercy. The hymn, "Libra nos Señor" resounds throughout the city, whilst all are befallen with fear and trembling, lest the mighty spirit, whose voice they recognized not in the sighing of the spring-breeze, should claim them as his victims.

The vesper-bell calls the families home, the bachelors to the coffee-houses to enjoy their chocolate. Even the labourer is accustomed to this luxury, and the women are not always willing to dispense with it. The business of the day is at an end; the merchants only, still enter their accounts, and prepare their correspondence for the post, which closes at 8 or 9 o'clock (Postal communication is arranged for the whole country, even for the most distant villages). The artizan puts his work-shop in order, many booths are closed; those who have worked all day, go to the market-place, to the *portales*, in order to hear and be heard. Most visits are paid in the evening. Those who do not go to the theatre are to be found at the tertullas, where several families join: they talk, smoke, amuse themselves with music and dancing, without troubling themselves about tea, confectionary, wine or punch. At most a glass of sweet wine is here and there presented, or *sangria* (negus) and lemonade. The Creole is temperate, and in order to be merry does not require the excitement called forth by spirituous liquors. The men frequently leave the

ladies to themselves, in order to play a game at Malilla or Tresillo, or generally to get up a little bank. The young bloods of course remain with the ladies; the conversation is easy, wit and repartee follow each other in rapid succession, inflammable natures ignite and burn fiercely; but outward decorum is never lost sight of. Here in familiar circles, the Spanish dances, boléros etc., are still met with; they are invariably accompanied with song, and are rendered highly significant by the gestures of the performers. The lovers understand the art of expressing their feelings by the eye and tongue, by piano and forte, by approaching and fleeing, and all without coming into contact with each other; whilst those who are jealous cast in thorns, in order to give vent to their bitterness.

These dances have quite disappeared from the balls; the pretty Spanish contredance has alone been retained, which occasionally replaces the dull French quadrille, and the endless succession of galoppades, polkas, and other lung-destroyers, void of character and grace. The young dandies who frequently visit the United States, France or England for a year, and as travelled lions return to their admiring cousins, instead of sound information, which might render their country good service, bring with them naught save a new dance, a bold cut for a dress or frock-coat; and all the fashionable world dances and dresses in the same manner. Our European lions do similar things!

It is now time to terminate our first wandering; about ten o'clock every one is at home, with the exception of the rakes and gamesters, and those who, screened by a pillar, wait for the opening of a balcony-door, whence the sun of their existence is to rise. The families take their supper late, and proceed incontinently to bed. Let us do the like, and fortify ourselves for a further sally.

XVI.

COMMERCE, SCHOOLS, ARTS AND SCIENCES.

Life in towns is everywhere distinguished by trade and commerce, which as they determine the physiognomy of towns, I shall here treat of generally.

Mexico's foreign commerce is carried on from the sea-ports; on the east coast by Matemoros, Tampico, Vera Cruz, Tabasco and Campeche; on the wes coast by Acapulco, San Blas and Mazatlan (Jamiltepec and Mansanillo are insignificant).

The houses which carry on the trans-marine business are mostly foreign; they receive the wares, dispose of a portion of them on the spot, and forward the remainder to the interior, or rather the principal depôt is in the interior, and the branch house on the coast. The capital, Mexico, is to be regarded as the centre of commerce, whither proceed the wares from Vera Cruz, Tampico, and Acapulco; Tampico, however, has branch-houses in San Luisand Potosi, Matamoros, in Monterey and Saltillo, San Blas in Guadalajara, and Campeche in Merida. The wholesale dealers procure what they require from the store-houses of the towns, and in their turn supply the petty merchants of the towns and villages.

Of the ports, none is strictly speaking a free-port, where ships can put in; and if they find no market for their cargoes, they again set sail. They can put in, indeed, only on paying the port-dues, and under certain restrictions, a measure of incalculable injury to the interests of commerce. The dues are high, and an ill-comprehended prohibitive system, intended to promote native enterprise, for which no elements at present exist, renders all manufactured goods dear. This is especially the case with manufactures required by the poorer classes, such as inferior cotton and woollen goods, iron wares etc. A country, which has still an enormous extent of arable land lying uncultivated, which might bring forth every vegetable product on the face of the earth, which is blessed with vast mineral wealth, and is in want of hands only: such a country should not dream of manufactures, but of promoting agriculture, and cultivating the raw produce for barter with the countries which are compelled to have recourse to manufactures. In order, for example, to maintain a small number of cotton and cloth factories producing ordinary stuffs, the importation of yarn and muslin is prohibited, although scarcely half the raw produce for these factories is produced in the country, but must be imported from North America. The consequence is, that the poor man, the Indian, must pay 300 per cent more for his sackcloth (manta), than if he were to procure it from abroad,* and that these high prices present great inducements to smuggling, which, with such an immense line of coast, and with so extensive a frontier is hardly to be prevented. It is precisely the same with cheap woollen-stuffs, blankets, carpets etc., also with iron-wares of the most indispensable nature. The manufacture of iron can scarcely be said to have commenced; and nine-tenths of what is required in iron and steel are imported. Tools of all kinds pay a heavy duty, in order that the smiths may benefit. At present the forges, especially the good ones, are few and far between, so that the labourer requiring an axe or a hoe, must often travel forty or fifty miles to find a good master-smith. Five or six days elapse before he can return to his work, which may be calculated at three dollars out of his pocket, including his expenses; for the new axe he pays from three dollars to three dollars and a half, which thus costs him between six and seven dollars, and breaks perhaps at the first blow. Owing to the duty, the excellent

* The best sackcloth can be sent to Vera Cruz for threepence the Spanish yard, which allows the dealer a fair profit. At present it costs one shilling.

Pittsburg axes are rendered very dear, nevertheless the labourers gladly pay five dollars a piece for them, so as not to lose their time. I could produce a whole series of such examples, to prove, that raising the prohibition and reducing the duty, would promote the interest of the people and of the government; the people would have cheap wares, and the exchequer a large revenue, consequent upon the increased consumption. Smuggling, which is now carried on in so barefaced a manner, would disappear, and manufactures would by competition be placed on a better footing, and cease to be sickly hot-house plants.

The high price of the most indispensable articles, is partly the cause of Mexico's unfavorable commercial standing. Excepting the precious metals, it has scarcely any articles of export, the cost of production being too high. To this may be added the hopeless condition of the roads leading from the coast to the interior. Nothing is done in the way of constructing roads, or very little indeed, whilst tolls are called for, without the money being applied to keeping the roads in repair, although the vehicles may be every moment in danger of turning over, or of sticking fast in the mud. This is the case on the sole practicable high-road from Vera Cruz to Mexico; we may therefore easily conceive the state of the other roads through dense forests and ravines. This circumstance renders the transport of goods singularly expensive; and herein lies a second hindrance to the exportation of produce, and to the flourishing of commerce generally. The vessels which convey foreign goods to the sea-ports, find no return cargoes, and must steer for other ports in search of them, necessarily causing greater outlay, which must be covered by higher charges for freight- These remarks, however, lead me further than I had intended: I shall return therefore to the towns.

The ports are far from presenting the busy appearance of the Havannah, or of the cities of the Northern Union. At the Havannah 500 ships may often be seen assembled; thousands of hands are occupied in lading and discharging: at Vera Cruz and Tampico, on the contrary, thirty sail are never met with at once, and frequently the black and brown tide-waiters may be seen lounging about on the quays, anxiously looking out for a mast to appear on the horizon. In the town itself there is more life, as there are still supplies enough in the warehouses; and long caravans of mules come from the country to fetch goods, whilst others are already passing out at the gate, each beast laden with two huge bales. The wholesale dealers may retail nothing, but must sell by bales; consequently so-called assortments *(almacenes surtidas)* are formed, in which the retail-dealer from town and country finds all he requires. In this way much business is done, whilst the countless shops *(tiendas)* serve exclusively for the town and immediate neighbourhood, doing therefore the actual retail trade. The latter may be subdivided into *tiendas de ropa*, dealing in linen-drapery, and into *pulperias*, for the sale of groceries, provisions, liquors etc. Both are frequently combined, and sell everything imaginable. A separate branch are the *mercerias* or hard-ware stores, dealing in metal, wood-work etc. These distinctions are observed

throughout the whole country; the retail business is in the village as in the capital, being, of course, larger or smaller according to the locality and the demand.

In the towns of the interior the traffic is more varied, as much business is done with the produce of the country. Considerable sales are effected in corn, wheaten-flour, pulse, rice, tallow, soap, hides, oil, wine, rum, pulque, sugar, coarse woollen and cotton cloths, blankets, mats, leather, cordage etc. This traffic is important and occupies many persons. In Mexico, Puebla and in other cities are vast magazines of this inland produce, where the retail dealers meet with assortments, in the same manner as in the warehouses for foreign manufactures.

There is no want of shops in the Mexican cities, though certainly they are not so numerous as in Europe. The corner-houses are considered to be most advantageously situated, but more particularly the shops under the arcades. The Mexican delights in a *tienda*; whoever can get a trifle together, opens a little store. Standing inactively behind a counter, chatting with purchasers and passers by, whilst a cigarito is being smoked, possesses a wondrous attraction for him. Many Spaniards, especially Catalonians and Galicians traffic in this way, and by diligence and economy all get on. Neither in trade nor in handicraft is any restraint imposed by guild statutes; every one can follow the profession that suits him, except the apothecary, who must be licensed and undergo examination.

Let us saunter through the town, and look at some of the outward indications of the trade. Placards with letters a yard long, just as in Europe; among them some singular ones, such as "The Ruin of Cheapness". Many of the signs are like those of our European inns, the Sun, the Angel, the Eagle etc. The door is open, and near it a heap of goods is usually piled up, indicating the business carried on, or that other articles may be had within, besides those exposed. Only a few of the newer shops have show-windows; indeed they are not requisite, as the whole shop is before you. On every counter a small chafing-dish is placed, the live coals covered with ashes, in order that the inevitable cigar may be lighted.

The shops of the linendrapers are richly supplied with fashionable stuffs. All the gossamer-like, trumpery webs, which fashion gives birth to in England and France, are displayed here. Carriages stop at the door, elegantly-dressed ladies have whole piles of goods shewn them, look and look again, find everything so very beautiful, and cannot decide on anything. At the shop next door, a great heap of coloured cloths informs us that inland stuffs only are sold here; but they meet with as many admirers as the London stuffs. Tradespeople from the country purchase an assortment of these beautiful *Sarapes*, and choose for their own use a *Sarape* of Saltillo, of genuine colours, and as impervious to water as an India-rubber coat. But 60 piastres are not to be sneezed at, and the old man scratches his head when he hears what his son wants, but at length buys it, and a Rekozo of Temascaltepec (the best kind of cotton shawl) for 36 piastres, destined for the future daughter in-law.

The wine-shops are adorned with full bottles, but behind, in the warehouse are numerous casks. *Cellars and lofts are unknown; goods of every description are on the ground-floor,* immediately behind the shop or counting-house. Still, at the first glance, the business of the North-European can be distinguished from that of the Spaniard or Mexican. The first has a number of clerks, who write all day, or pretend to write. The latter has only one clerk, who occasionally notes down something; the other assistants are shopmen. These are skilful fellows, quick in business, but somewhat impudent; they are never in want of an answer, have many sweet speeches for the female customers, keep the male customers in good humour; but, if report lies not, are apt to cover the deficit in their private purses by making inroad on their master's, which, however, serves him right, if he does not pay more attention to his business.

In the wine-shop are three fat Spaniards drinking a glass of the wine of their own country, assuring those about them at each sip, that good wine is to be met with nowhere save in Spain. The glass is taken standing before the bar, as is the custom here. Only intimate acquaintances of the master go into the warehouse, and seat themselves on empty casks.

The greatest amount of petty traffic is done in the grocers' shops, but it is a wearisome affair. The cooks and kitchen-maids pour in and out, because the requisites for every meal are always fetched in detail. Here it is merely a question of Tlacos and Cuartillas, the smallest coin of the republic (the eighth and fourth part of a real, about sixpence), or at the utmost of half a real, and yet this is a most lucrative business, if the shopkeeper understands what he is about. Great activity is requisite on the part of the shopmen in order to serve the customers quickly, whilst at the same time those who are waiting must be amused with a jest, those who are importunate be pacified, and all be satisfied. The large and fashionable shops and warehouses present nothing singular in appearance. With some slight variation in the decorations and general arrangement, they resemble those of Europe; but the groceries are interesting for the study of the popular customs, and one should not neglect to listen to them in passing. Not only is something flattering said to every female-customer, however old and smoke-dried she may be, but she must also have her *algo*, her commission, whenever she buys for more than half a real, when a few cigaritos, or a thimbleful of *mistela* (sweet brandy), or something of the sort fall to her share. To attract and retain custom is the business of chandler-shopkeepers. The children get a morsel of sweet-stuff; and indeed all the children of the neighbourhood, even though their mothers send them to other *tiendas*, are sure to come here. I remember an enterprising Spaniard, whose grocery was in the square of a small country town. He had a saddled donkey standing under the eaves of his shop, and all the boys who came to buy something, enjoyed the privilege of a donkey-ride. This, of course, attracted all the boys of the town; the man had an uncommon run of business, and became rich in a few years.

It is in the nature of these establishments to be the bazaar for all the town-talk and scandal. Every morning, beginning at half past six o'clock, the women come to fetch bread, chocolate, coffee and sugar: of course there is much to be related, as to what has taken place during the past evening and night, and as the same persons appear four times a day to make their purchases, the chronicle is easily kept up. Here also assemble naturally the labourers, coachmen, water-bearers and idlers, to have a throw, to purchase something, to have a chat. Thus the materials for the news of the day are wonderfully increased, and acquire almost an official character. Further it is a general rendezvous, messages are brought and sent, and the Mexicans say proverbially: "The *tienda* is the greatest match-maker."

Peculiar to the traffic of the cities, are the numerous peripatetic salesmen, the little stalls (*mesas* or *camillas*) under the porticos, at the corners of the streets, before the churches and public buildings, and finally the broker-markets, like those of the Jewish quarters of many European cities, and which are kept and attended by the unwashed alone.

There are but few booksellers and bookbinders, a proof that the intellectual requirements of the people are very limited and easily satisfied.

Exchanges are met with in few cities, and have but lately been introduced Most business is done by the agents, who constitute a guild, with a limited number of fellows, who are subjected to an examination before being received. Generally there is much good faith and confidence in doing business, important transactions are frequently arranged without witnesses, and considerable sums change hands without the aid of an agent. The rate of interest is high, and no legal restriction is imposed. Commission business commands at least 2½ per cent, and transit and packing-dues may be considered high.

The manufactories of Mexico are not sufficiently extensive to confer a distinctive feature on the population of the respective cities. In Puebla, for instance, there are factories with steam and water-power; but the majority of the manufactures are produced by hand and sold to the dealers. The class of factory-labourers is too insignificant to be predominating, as at Manchester, Lyons or Elberfeld; they are lost sight of in the masses, and where they influence the character of individual cities, the fact will subsequently be alluded to, when individual cities are noticed. Puebla produces more especially cotton stuffs and coarse hats, Queretavo, woollen goods, Leon, leather, sadlery and iron wares, Zelaya, soap etc., without any material difference being observed between them and other cities; only the mining-towns exhibit a spirit peculiar to the inhabitants, which we shall allude to in the part devoted to mining.

To conclude this chapter, weadd a few remarks about education, and the present state of the arts and sciences, as these results of social development are exhibited more in the cities than in the country. —

The elementary schools in the cities are under the superintendence of the municipal council, and the teachers are paid from the civic fund. Most towns consider it a point of honour to educate the children of both sexes as well as possible; but

as there is a lack of seminaries for the teachers themselves, it is difficult to meet with individuals fitted for the position. The schools are well attended, although the obligation to attend is not strictly enforced; the results, however, are insignificant.

For the classical education of youth, all the cities are provided with a kind of gymnasium, termed *colegios*, which are arranged quite after the fashion of the old convent-schools. The scholars live together in the monastic style, the teachers are ecclesiastics, the course of education, about the same as it was in Germany 300 years ago. The whole arrangement is wretched, and little calculated to promote intellectual or moral development.

Lately therefore they have begun to form classical schools on the European plan, and in this the mining-towns Guanajuato and Zacatecas have set a good example. The capital has also endeavoured to keep up with the spirit of the times; but the means were not always equal to the object in view. The mining-school, *Colegio de mineria,* richly endowed by the Spaniards, requires re-modelling, and above all good masters.

Most of the classical schools are monastic foundations, and therefore their whole management reposes in the hands of the superior clergy. The stability which exists in the system of the Church, renders it improbable that innovations of any significance will take place, more especially as the property of the church is managed exclusively by ecclesiastics, without any interference of the state. The state, indeed, has made various attempts to obtain the management of church property; but being unable to offer any satisfactory guarantee for the safety of the capital, the affair could not be accomplished.

The universities are organized in accordance with the other classical schools; every faculty has its scholastic, conventual arrangement, opposed to the free development of the sciences and the study of life. Young men of property finish their studies abroad, especially those who study medicine. The superior Medical Board *(el proto medicato)* can boast of intelligent men, who have to examine all candidates desirous of becoming practitioners.

Taken on the whole, the scientific development of the Mexican cities is at least equal to that of those of most of the provinces in the Pyrenean peninsula, which however, is not saying much.

Very little has been done in Mexico for the arts; in the capital, however, there is an academy for painting and sculpture (*Academia de San Carlos),* which boasts of some tolerable disciples; as yet it has exercised very little influence on the development of taste, nor has it laid the foundation of an original school. Up to the present day art has attempted to adorn the temples only, if those uncouth productions which disfigure the altars of many village-churches, and even of the town-churches can be considered adornment.

There is no want of talent for plastic productions, as exhibited in the wax figures and little statues representing popular groups, individual figures, fruits, animals etc. Even the Indian evinces a taste for elegant forms, as shown in his potters'

ware, in his flower-portals-before the churches and public buildings, and in his altar decorations.

In architecture there is a want of good models. The public and private buildings of the towns are for the most part very firm, massive, and practical; but there is a want of elegance in the exterior. Lately, however, many façades have been rebuilt in the modern style: but in the great majority of the buildings, a traditional Spanish architectural style prevails, which has evidently borrowed its internal arrangement from the ancient Roman house, and occasionally by its Arabic forms reminds one of the magnificence of Granada and Cordova. The house of the wealthy citizen is fitted up very luxuriouly. A beautiful marble staircase conducts to the principal floor, to the piazza which encloses the court-yard (the impluvium of the Romans) on four sides. On the parapet are flowering plants in large Chinese vases, the walls being adorned with paintings. The numerous and splendid apartments exhibit elegant carpets, expensive furniture, costly paintings on the walls and ceilings. The floors are of burnt stone or of marble, and often of a hard kind of composition which is painted like a carpet and varnished. Elegantly arranged houses are found not only in the capital, but also in the provincial towns, for the wealthy Mexican displays the greatest pride in his house and furniture, in his numerous attendants, handsome carriages, expensive horses and mules, whilst the rich European has other hobbies.

A taste for beautiful villas and gardens is but just beginning to shew itself in the capital. In the immediate vicinity of the city, the salt marshy soil is unfavorable, although Brussels and the Hague prove that such hindrances may be overcome; consequently in the small town of Tacubaya, a league from Mexico, villas with gardens have been called into existence, where a number of wealthy families rusticate from March till June. In the villages of St. Augustin and of St. Angelo, picturesquely situated on hills at the extremity of the plain, many families have houses with wild orchards, in which they occasionally pass a festival; generally speaking, however, the townspeople of Mexico are no great friends of travelling nor of the pleasures of a country-life.

In town and in the country every one is fond of music; the Creole and the Mestizo have much talent; all the world plays and sings, and yet musical education is quite in the back-ground. The congregation do not join in the singing at church, only the paid choristers raise their voices, and these are met with in the cathedrals and larger churches alone. Music is nowhere taught in schools. The young learn to strum on the piano, harp or guitar, without knowing a note, and even whole bands of performers on stringed and wind instruments only play by ear. The number of those who receive regular instruction in music is very small. In the larger cities, especially in the capital, good orchestras are found, and even in private circles music is cultivated with some degree of success. The German "Liedertafel" in Mexico, who gave even public concerts for charitable purposes, contributed no little towards awakening a taste for chorus-singing.

There exist some tolerable Mexican compositions, but which do not bear the impress of nationality.

The centre of attraction for profane music is the opera; indeed the taste for the theatre is very prevalent among the people of the Mexican towns, and the whole population is passionately fond of public representations. In the capital of the republic much is done for the opera, because the connoisseurs and amateurs are numerous. The celebrated Manuel Garcia was properly speaking the founder of the opera, which he directed during some years. By his indefatigable exertions, and his excellent method, he succeeded in bringing on the stage the master pieces of Mozart, Cortes and the Vestal by Spontini, the best productions of Rossini etc.; and thus by admitting only that which was excellent, formed the taste of the public for good music. The opera has stood its ground ever since, and although the admission of the ballet has flattered the eye of the theatre-going public more than the ear of the musician, the results are by no means inconsiderable.

The city of Mexico has three theatres: one for comedy and vaudeville, the old Coliseo and the new national theatre. The last was built in the year 1843, and for size and elegance may vie with the first in Europe. Acoustically considered, it is quite successful; there is much room and comfort, and several handsome saloons for the entertainment of the public. Play, opera and ballet alternate, and the performances are not unworthy of the fine building.

The larger provincial cities, such as Puebla, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, have permanent theatres; in the smaller towns, such as Vera Cruz, Orizava, Oajaca, in the cool season, from October till April only.

Even at the theatre, the Mexican cannot dispense with his cigarito, and as soon as the curtain falls little blue vapours rise in the air in all directions, many of them from the mouths of the fair sex. The ladies appear in the boxes only, and are prone to exhibiting themselves in beautiful attire. The fan is a necessary companion, but a very unquiet one, which is constantly being opened and closed. Sometimes it must serve to conceal a roguish face, sometimes to transmit signals to an admirer, sometimes to threaten a vacillating suitor, and occasionally to hide the ennui of the bearer.

The pieces represented are partly by the old classical writers Calderon, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Moreto etc., partly by modern dramatists, such as Moratin, Martinez de la Rosa, Zorilla etc. Besides these there are a host of translations of the good and bad productions of all nations. Schiller and Alfieri, Kotzebue and Scribe, Shakespeare and Raupach are names which are read in the play-bills of the Andes' cities, as well as on the Spree and Neva.

In the country itself few have distinguished themselves in dramatic literature; the works of Manuel Gorostiza are about the best, and have even been honourably received in Spain.

A sort of imitation of the old 'autos sacramentales' is occasionally met with on the Mexican stage. They are representations of biblical scenes with poetical elucidations

and music. Thus I recollect to have seen the Deluge represented with much scenic splendour; the Passion is also sometimes represented, which is indeed not peculiar to the countries where the Spanish tongue is spoken, but may also be met with in more northerly latitudes. The following literal translation of a play-bill printed at Inspruck in the year 1850, may serve as a proof of the assertion: "The whole of the bitter Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, represented in fourteen pictures", and "the glorious Resurrection, lighted with Bengal fire."

A glance at literature in general may serve to conclude this short digression from our pilgrimage through the cities. In the 16th century much scientific zeal was exhibited in Mexico; partly by the Spanish, partly by natives; excellent historical, grammatical, theological, and other scientific works were produced. The 17th and 18th centuries are remarkable for their want of intellectual culture. This was part of the system of the government, which regarded every independent development of the mind in the colonies as a dangerous precedent, capable of producing the worst consequences, and deserving to be suppressed by the inquisition. It was not till the close of the eighteenth century, about the same period as in Germany, that scientific research began to make fresh strides. Two excellent works on the history of the country, date from this period; that of Mariano Veytia and of the Abbé Clavigero. The latter, a native of Vera Cruz, being a Jesuit, was exiled. In Italy he published the result of thirty years' researches, his distinguished "Ancient History of Mexico," a work, which shed light on the chaos of the early history of the country.

In the first decennium of the present century, the struggle of the colonies with the mother country commenced. Many of the Creoles of Mexico enthusiastically seized upon the idea of independence, and many literary productions of this period, many poetic effusions, evidence unusual progress. A ruinous war, which lasted eleven years brought all scientific endeavours to a pause. Not till the year 1821, when the Spanish reign was at an end, did a new epoch for literature begin. The licentiate Zarate had already done much against the Spaniards with the pen. Two romances of his exist, which by their accurate delineation of the social condition of the country, possess great interest. Perico Sarniento and La Pepita are the titles of these works. Further he has written a number of good fables, and humorously, even satirically edited the periodical "el pensador mejicano (the Mexican Thinker)."

In the last thirty years, literature has made no inconsiderable progress. The taste displayed by the Creoles for poetry, has given birth to numerous volumes worthy of notice. Besides Gorostiza already named, Calderon and several others have produced dramatic works: Pesado, Heredia, Sanchez. — Tagle, Ortaga, Pagno have distinguished themselves as lyric poets. A humorous volume, "el gallo pitagorico (the Cock of Pythagoras)", attacked the corruption introduced into the state by Santanna's mal-administration, and the persecution to which the author, John Gonzalez, was consequently exposed, evidences that he was acquainted with the sore places.

Charles Maria Bustamente acquired some distinction as an historian. Lorenzo Zaavala and Lucas Alaman published some historical essays and treatises..

Cervantes, de la Llave and Lejarza produced some valuable contributions to natural history (botany), whilst Joseph Maria Bustamente enriched science by geopraphical, orographical and geognostic researches.

The number of newspapers printed in Mexico is considerable; but few of them are skilfully conducted.

This casual glance at Mexico's literature is far from comprising all that has been published, but merely those things that especially caught our eye, consequent on their being displayed in the shop-windows of the booksellers. Those who visit the capital, will find in a little shop in the Portal de Augustinos, all the novelties of the Mexican muse. Interesting is the collection of popular songs, which represent the poetical element existing amongst the people. These songs pass from mouth to mouth, and are sung to the dancers; the composers are unknown; and as in many parts of Europe, they appear to be spontaneous joyous effusions. The Creole, as well as the Mestizo improvises with facility; he makes love, he teazes in verse, and the wit of the singer excites and enlivens the auditors. The Indian, on the contrary, has no poetry peculiar to himself, and though here and there an Aztec song is heard, it is a mere imitation of the Spanish.

XVII.

MILITARY AFFAIRS IN MEXICO.

One beautiful evening I was strolling leisurely along the promenade de las Vigas on the borders of the great canal, and regarded with delight the golden glow in the west, the reflection of which tinted the snowy peaks of the highlands with purple — when some one seized me by the arm. It was my new acquaintance, the captain with the enormous moustache.

"At length I am so fortunate as to see you again", said he; "for several evenings I have come hither in hopes of meeting you, as I owe you an explanation." — "Not that I am aware of," I returned. "We scarcely exchanged ten words." — "Precisely on that account", he continued. "You have only heard me speak with

V. Angerstein del. Druck & Verlag v. G. G. Lange in Darmstadt. *C. N. Kurz sculp.*

SOLDIERS AND PROLETARIANS.

SOLDADOS CIVICOS DE TIERRA CALIENTE Y FRUTEROS. (MEXICO.) *SOLDATEN UND PROLETARIER.*

others, and may possibly entertain a bad opinion of me and of my sentiments. Do you recollect my conversation with the licentiate? We cross blades as often as we meet, and are nevertheless the best friends. If he attacks my profession, I fall foul of his; and unhappily much may be said against both. At the same time you must not suppose that I entertain an unfavorable opinion, generally, of the law as a profession. I respect the bench, and acknowledge the talent of many of the judges, but cannot close my eyes to the carelessness, partiality and corruptibility of others, who disgrace their position. The subalterns and scribblers especially should be subjected to the strictest control. This want is intimately connected with the feebleness of the government in general; they are afraid of sweeping measures, and let everything go on in the old way. As for my profession, which your friend the licentiate so severely attacked, I flatter myself I can afford you better information than the majority. We must first look back a few years. The Spaniards always maintained a considerable force in their colonies, chiefly composed of Europeans, but not to the exclusion of the Creoles. The excellent financial position of the American colonies rendered it comparatively easy to keep the regiments on a superior footing; many young Creoles, the sons of Spaniards, served in the hope of advancement; and I myself began my military career as a cadet in a Spanish regiment.

"Early in the present century the idea of a separation from the mother country and the assumption of an independent political existence began to take root. Bolivar's rising in Caraccas acted like an electric shock; but the numerous Spaniards, possessed of the whole civil and military government, sought by severity to suppress the spirit of independence, even when their own country, occupied by the French, was on the brink of ruin; and they were enabled to carry out their views, as, besides their own troops, they could depend on many of the Creoles, whose interests were intimately connected with those of the government. The strictest terrorism, however, could not long keep down the spirit which had been called forth; it increased daily, and at length, in 1810, the independent party, led by Hidalgo and Allende took up arms against the Spaniards. It was natural, that many of the native officers and soldiers should quit the Spanish ranks and join their countrymen, and it was equally natural that as professional men they should be entrusted with the most important commands.

In the sanguinary struggle which lasted ten years, the leaders frequently changed, for the sword carried off many. The Spaniards brought all their force to bear on the rebellious provinces, in order not to be compelled to relinquish their most valuable possession, and their tactics and discipline succeeded in overcoming the desultory bravery of the undisciplined masses. The popular party, indeed, evidenced undoubted talent in warfare; for instance, the two ecclesiastics Morelos and Matamoros; but they were defeated in pitched battles, owing to the rawness of their troops. A long and wearisome guerilla warfare succeeded, which was wonderfully favored by the steep mountainous country, by the extensive forests, and deep ravines. The champions of independent America were forced to seek shelter in the most inaccessible mountains of the coast, whence they made incursions into the Spanish territory,

attacked their money convoys, or punished individual adherents of the Spanish party. The chiefs of these guerillas, who never submitted, Guerrero, Bravo, Cos, Victoria etc., termed themselves generals; but their sphere of action was very limited. Towards the year 1820 they no longer ventured to quit their mountain retreats, as the arms of the Spaniards had completely subdued the inhabited districts, although the attachment of the Creoles to the cause of independence had taken such deep root, that it could not possibly be eradicated by force.

"Augustin Iturbide, a Mexican by birth, from his youth a soldier in the ranks of the Spaniards, and when victorious often hard towards his countrymen, obtained the command of a division, intended to destroy the remaining insurgents in the Sierra Madre. On the road to Acapulco he took the resolution to free his country. Probably he had long cherished the idea, and a simple song of his soldiers, the tones of which reached his ear one night whilst in his tent, are said to have matured his resolve. He declared himself for independence, overcame the last endeavours of the Spanish party, and gaxe Mexico her liberty. The sword had effected this revolution, and all who had formerly fought in the cause, took part in it. But there were also many Spaniards in the army, therefore it was determined that all the Spaniards in the country should be regarded as citizens, and that all the officers who desired it, should retain their service, bearing the same rank.

"Iturbide sacrificed to ambition the happiness of his country; for a short time he wore, a crown which had been conferred on him by his satellites; but the regal diadem rendered him giddy, and the soldiers destroyed the ephemeral throne they had erected.

The people now chose the republican form of government, and moreover the federal constitution, after the precedent of the United States. It was an act of justice to endeavour to reward the men, who for upwards of ten years had struggled, exposed to infinite danger and privations, against the Spaniards; but it was an error on the part of government to award them the highest dignities and the largest amount of pay in the standing armies. Most of them had received no military education, indeed, no education whatever; they made themselves ridiculous in the eyes of their subalterns, whose neglect they frequently overlooked, thus rendering the bonds of discipline uncommonly lax. The greater part of the Spanish troops had quitted the ranks after the capitulations of Iguala and Cordova, and had left the country. It was necessary to restore the battalions, and the insurgents who, owing to their camp-life, had taken a dislike to work, but had not become acquainted with discipline, were partly employed as subaltern and as non-commissioned officers. The national-guard was to be the chief defence of the country; but it was so badly organised, whilst the great mass of the population, in consequence of the long and ruinous war, had taken such a dislike to the profession of arms, that the whole institution of the national-guard had become the tool and the butt of the line.

"Thus in the first years of the republic the organisation of the army had become exceedingly faulty; there was a want of discipline, a want of tactics, a want of an educated body of officers, who would have comprehended that to them was

entrusted the safety and defence of a free state. They had no other model than the Spanish army, whose ordonnances were still in force; a circumstance which, when one is acquainted with the history of the Spanish war-department, will scarcely leave room for surprise at the results.

"The history of our country for the last 25 years, presents an unsatisfactory picture of civil commotion, in which the standing army played the pitiful part of assisting sometimes one partisan, sometimes another to gain the upper hand. The imprudent dismissal of the Spaniards, had already deprived the army of many excellent officers, who were, in part, replaced by a worthless set. In the constant party-struggles, each endeavoured to obtain influence by appointing submissive chiefs, without daring to render those whom they had shaken off, their avowed foes. The complete demoralisation of the army dates from the period when Santanna began to take part in the affairs of the republic. This man, who had the opportunity presented him of becoming his country's benefactor, has done incalculable mischief. He is of a thoroughly immoral character, a refined egotist, who only played a part because he knew the weak side of his countrymen, and understood how to profit by it. The welfare of the country is indifferent to him, honour and conscience, fidelity and faith were for him empty words, which he employed as they chanced to suit his interest, and as he always found tools for his egotistic plans, his influence exercised a demoralising influence on all classes of society. By means of a revolt he got the management of affairs into his own hands, and by prudent transactions with his opponents he knew how to gain over that part of the army which was devoted to the government. By advancing the superior officers, by giving commissions for the inferior grades at his own will and pleasure, he created for himself a band of prætorians, who became the willing instruments of his selfish plans.

"At the end of the year 1845 the unanimous voice of the people removed him from the helm, and banished him. During his long dictatorship every branch of the administration had fallen into irreparable disorder. In the government expenditure immense sums had figured every year for the war-department, from 12 to 15 million pesos, and yet there were no warlike stores, the troops were badly clothed, the fortresses dismantled; the army, which ought to have been 36,000 men strong, could scarcely number 10,000. Fabulous as it may appear, the army-register counted 120 generals, and 30,000 officers; all demanded their pay for doing nothing, and this army of vampires was to be fed by the country. In order to conceive the matter, you must be careful not to lose sight of the historical details to which I have already called your attention. There were many old fellows of the Spanish period, many whom the guerilla chiefs changed from peasants into officers at pleasure. In the civic disturbances a number of officers had arisen, each pronunciamento created colonels and generals by the dozen. You laugh? Well then, I must inform you how it is done. It suddenly occurs to some former soldier, perhaps a captain, residing in a village three hundred leagues from the capital, that the government is good for nothing. He speaks about it with Jack and Peter of the same village, reads the newspaper

to them, shews letters from friends of consequence, which also blame the minister, and harangues his gossips that it is for them to change matters. They are content, and beat up proletarians for their scheme, rascals who prefer spending money to working, and know well enough that little is to be risked in such matters. A discontented colonel is known; he is informed that the country looks up to him as her liberator and he is requested to place himself at their head. If he be one of the right sort, he comes with some of his confidants, a consultation is immediately held, and the plan for reforming the world is concocted. The same night the town-hall is taken possession of, the aldermen are sent for, are made acquainted with the intentions of the revolutionists, and compelled to do homage. On this the tax-gatherer is obliged to hand over all he has in his strong-box, and should it be little, a forced loan is raised from the disaffected shopkeepers of the place, the alarm-bell is rung, rockets are sent up, and when all the inhabitants are assembled in the market-place, they are informed of what has taken place. Now follow loud cheers for the patriots, especially for the general-in-chief, as he is dubbed; a proclamation is then put forth, addressed to the whole nation, which is, of course, read with applause, and as soon as a sufficiently animating quantity of spirits have been drunk, it is resolved to march upon the next market-town. All hasten to fetch their arms and horses; the women howl and refuse to let their husbands depart; and indeed, with many of them no great amount of persuasion is requisite. They slip out at the back-door to the forest till the tumult is over. At length, after midnight, the patriotic army is ready to march. Though few, they are full of courage; the bottle is passed round once more at the expence of the regiment, and the heroes vanish in the darkness.

"If all goes well; several villages are surprised and join the rebels; when the principal village of a district has given in its adherence, a provisional government is appointed, and the army (200 men perhaps) organised, armed and drilled, the newspapers are full of it, a detachment of fifty soldiers are sent out against them by the prefect, but return with all speed at sight of the superior numbers of the foe. The prefect packs up his archives and hastens off, whilst every one seeks to conceal his property of all kinds. Men who can be depended on are sent to treat with the insurgents, to sound them, and to promise to join them, in order to gain time.

"Meanwhile fleet messengers are sent off to the provincial government, and to the federal government. The provincial authorities complain that they have neither money nor arms to put down the increasing movement, presume that the conspiracy has far-extending ramifications, talk of a certain party, who are waiting for the favorable moment only, and request speedy assistance from the capital. If the pronunciados were energetic men, they might generally march half way across the country, before meeting with any organised resistance; but they decline going far, merely look round to see where they can lay their hands on some public funds, and guard against a surprise. They have great difficulty in keeping their men together, who have all sorts of scruples ready, when the excitement is at an end. I know

of an instance, where the whole quota of a village declared to their chief, that they must now return home to have their shirts washed!

"At length information is brought that the government troops have marched. A council of war is held, it is resolved to occupy a strong position, to withdraw to the mountains, nevertheless they remain for the present in the village. A well combined attack, would in a general way settle the whole affair, and place them all at the mercy of the government; but first milder measures must be attempted. The blood of citizens must not be shed, and those who have strayed must be reclaimed. The rebels proudly reject all advances; some of the outposts fire on each other from a distance of a thousand yards; a dozen of the government soldiers desert; this is a bad omen, and prudence is the mother of wisdom. Some honest people of the neighbourhood offer their mediation, which is accepted; and the end of the story is, that after several bootless marches, after wasting a tolerable quantity of powder, an agreement is come to, according to the terms of which the chiefs of pronunciados lay down their arms, and acknowledge the authority of the government, retain the rank, dignity and pay which they have conferred on themselves, keep what they have stolen from the state, dismiss their army, and are all completely amnestied.

"This is the way in which the pronunciamentos are usually managed, by which means the army is supplied with a vast number of excellent colonels, and even generals, with whom Santanna, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, has done a good deal of profitable business. The impunity of such crimes has brought much misfortune upon the country, and will bring much more if the government does not make itself respected.

"Much as the number of officers was increased by this means, it fades into utter insignificance when compared with the great deeds of Santanna. According to official documents, he signed 13,000 commissions while at the head of affairs. Among them were many which were given by him on birthdays etc., partly to mere children, the little boys of his adherents, on their being breeched, when the little monkey was furnished with an officer's uniform. This was chiefly done in order to strengthen his party, but frequently also as a reward for services received (as with you in Europe, where I understand that orders are given in a similar manner). A good German shoemaker, for instance, made His Excellency a wonderful boot for his club-foot. The artist was rewarded according to his deserts with a captain's commission; for he had helped to put the first man in the republic on his legs. The cobbler now determined not to stick to his last, but to strut about with his plumed hat and sabre. The shoe-shop, however, was still carried on, although the *captain* had so much to do with his comrades in the coffee-houses and guard-rooms, and had such difficulty in quenching the thirst thereby given rise to, that the *master* had no time to cut out, or to look after his journeymen. The customers complained of corns, of bad workmanship, and gave their orders elsewhere; and ere long the respected, thriving German shoemaker had become a poor vagabondising Mexican captain."

"And you", I enquired with surprise, "can serve with such troops?" — "Nay indeed!" he returned, "I have long since obtained my discharge; but I still occupy myself with military studies, and shall again take service, when military affairs wear a better appearance. I am far from affirming, that the officers of the acting army are not good, on the contrary there are many excellent well informed men amongst them, who would do honour to the profession in any country. But with an army of officers, appointed in the manner I have told you, you may easily conceive that many are not worthy of the name."

"I find that perfectly natural," I returned, "but I was at a loss to comprehend that people, who had at least worn a sword, could commit dishonorable, even criminal actions, without being struck off the list, or having their epaulets publicly snatched from their shoulders by their brother-officers. I recollect now to have read that a colonel was convicted of forging, that captains were named, who distinguished themselves as amateur robbers, that others figured as blacklegs, and that others refused to give satisfaction in affairs of honour. Once even I myself saw an officer's ears repeatedly boxed in a jeweller's shop, for having allowed some rings to stick to his fingers without intending to pay for them. He shook himself, however, and went out as though nothing had happened."

The captain made a queer face, in which vexation and humour strove for the mastery. "That is precisely what I am constantly saying and writing", he continued, "that a great purification is absolutely necessary. What you say, is unhappily too true, that such despicable fellows are on the list, who would be fitting ornaments for the gallows or the house of correction. I cannot understand why the government has not long since struck off all such names, for these rogues do not belong to the actual army; they have no claim on the state, and are constantly crying out for and soliciting their back pay. They are the most useless proletarians, who should be deprived of all hope of support from the state: they can work or starve. Where there is such a total want of education and morality, there can be no talk of honour. Many, very many swear by the great Jack Falstaff, and say with him: 'What is honour? A word; what is a word?' Wind? For such a windy thing as honour they draw no sword, they thoroughly despise the mediæval barbarism of the duel, in which they are supported by the law, and the bold patriot is heroic enough, like the ancient Romans — fortia agere et pati — rather to put up with a few blows, than violate the laws, or do homage to a barbarous prejudice. Whoever conceives himself insulted, can go to the magistrates, who you know are paid for the purpose of listening to complaints."

"Here captain, I cannot agree with you", I interrupted, "for without honesty, this appearance of honour is a mere nullity, and in a well-regulated state, duels ought never to be permitted. It is a mistake: for a phantom one is ready to risk everything, life itself, to cast all one's obligations into the scale. Whenever an insult is offered, one must be right, the other wrong, or there must be a misunderstanding. Misunderstandings must be cleared up, and the dispute is at an end; whoever is

proved to be wrong, must have morality, uprightness enough to acknowledge it, and this is certainly a better atonement, than, having insulted an honest man, to send a bullet through his head, because you happen to be a better shot. The *esprit du corps* should suffer none but men of the most spotless honour to be amongst them; and for quarrels, which can never be wholly avoided, courts of honour, composed of the most respected officers, will do more than the sword and pistol."

"I find no reasonable objection to your view of the case, when it concerns a body of officers who are imbued with the feelings and possess the spirit of gentlemen", returned the captain; "but where this 'esprit du corps' to which you allude is wanting, I keep the fellows off, if they know that they must fight me should they raise my choler. But we will talk of this some other time, for I have constructed my own theory, which differs materially from that of the immortal knight Don Quixote.

"For the present I will keep to the thread of my discourse, and tell you a little more of our military affairs. The influence of Santanna, who for upwards of twelve years did as he pleased with the army, had, as I have already told you, a very bad influence. Some advantages which he obtained at the beginning of his career, during the civil commotions, over his adversaries, impressed him with the belief, that he was possessed of great military talent. He knew nothing of the history of warfare, nor of the science of war in the stricter sense, he was no tactician, knew nothing of engineering, despised all fundamental study, and suffered no man of talent to be near him, who might have introduced a thorough reform into the army. Every battle where, of late years, Santanna commanded in person, was lost by gross mistakes on his part, whilst he afterwards made generals who commanded under him responsible, and had them before a court-martial for gross neglect, of which he alone was guilty. This was especially the case in the late war with the United States. Contrary to the advice of better generals than himself, he marched from San Luis to Saltillo in order to attack Taylor, at an unfavorable season of the year, by the worst roads, through a parched uninhabited waste, many leagues in extent. Want of provisions, of forage for his horses, drought, snow and cold, had completely exhausted the army, and yet he attacked Taylor, who had enjoyed a long rest, and had chosen a good position at Buena Vista.

"For this march through the desert, there was no reason whatever; there was no important military position to cover, no reinforcements were advancing, and he might quietly have waited on his own side of the desert, for his adversary to place himself at a disadvantage by crossing to attack him. In the battle against Scott near Cerro Gordo, Santanna occupied a very difficult pass, and had troops enough to keep the Americans long occupied; but he refused to listen to the advice of one of his engineers who repeatedly called his attention to the weakness of one flank, which might easily have been covered with a few entrenchments; he made no dispositions for a retreat, and placed his cavalry in reserve upon a hill, where it was impossible for it to manœuvre.

"I should never have done, if I were to enter on the details of these battles, and of those that followed. All testify that the most wretched dispositions were the main cause of our ruin. The bravest soldiers can do nothing without a leader. In Cerro Gordo most of the chiefs had disappeared before the position was lost; one captain defended a mountain-path with his company to the last man, and fell like a hero; not the subalterns, not the soldiers were to blame, but the leaders.

"The Mexican soldier goes with great coolness and contempt of death into battle, and endures fatigue and privation without murmuring. His frugality is to be admired. With a little bag of *pinole*, a kind of flour prepared from roasted maize and sugar, and which is mixed in a cup of cold water, he marches for several days without any other food, the ground serving as his couch, and the sky for his covering. He is tractable and attached to his captain, if the latter be imbued with a military spririt, and himself practise the discipline he requires from others. And what might our military not have been, if, as in Prussia, military service were the duty of every citizen. But our recruiting-system has always been a very wretched affair.

"The conscription", continued the captain, "is here not customary, nor is there any regular method of recruiting according to the age, as no exact lists of the population are to be met with in the parishes. When the battalions are reduced by mortality or desertion, so that they can scarcely be regarded as companies, orders are sent by the war-minister to the governors of provinces to complete the numbers. Each battalion has its recruiting district. The general-in-chief asks for the requisite number from the governor, who writes to the prefects for their quota, according to the census of their departments. The prefect orders the under-prefects and local authorities not to remove diligent people from their occupations, but to seize upon the idlers, vagabonds, strollers, drunkards and other notorious rogues (vagos y mal entretenidos, jugadores, ebrios y sujetos de mala nota), and to forward them safely escorted. Should the requisite number, however, not be forthcoming, the single men must draw lots in order that the deficiency may be made good.

These recruiting orders invariably cause a panic among the honourable class of vagabonds, who disperse like chaff before the wind, and conceal themselves in forests and ravines, a very easy matter in a country so thinly populated. These orders, therefore, are mostly forwarded in secret, and as the local authorities are bound to send in the requisite number, they quietly look round for fitting subjects. Quite unexpectedly, on some fine evening, they are seized in the gaming-houses, in the streets, or in their houses, by a patrol of the civic guard, kept in safe custody, and the following morning, with their arms tied behind their backs, and fastened two and two, are despatched to the district town.

"In the villages Sunday is the day usually selected, because the people are then generally assembled in the market-place; or they are pressed on Saturday at a dance, which is announced with many rockets, precisely in order to attract the game they are in search of, and who, for the most part, are enthusiasts for similar social entertainments. But who shall describe the trepidation of the merry party,

when the alcalde suddenly appears with the guard, occupies the doorways, and selects the gents possessed of the requisite qualifications. The cry: 'leva (recruiting)' produces greater dismay than an earthquake. Once I saw an old woman hurrying off to the fields, and on asking what was the matter, she replied panting: 'They are recruiting!' — 'Well', said I, 'they'll not take you!' She replied, that it was impossible to tell, and that at all events it was safer to hide.

"When the recruits have reached the district-town, little ceremony is made with them. If they have money, which is rarely the case, or wealthy friends, who will do something for them, their liberation may in most cases be effected; should it be otherwise, they become champions for country, right and freedom. They are now sent forward to the depôt, and confined in the barracks, where they find a good school for any description of knavery hitherto unknown to them.

"With this mode of recruiting it necessarily often happens, that not only the actual vagabonds are laid hold of, but that the class of poor devils are ensnared. Where are there not orphans, foundlings, and so forth? In the small villages these must generally take their turn, they are marched off, and no one puts in a word for them, whilst many, who are undeserving of it, escape because they have parents and relations who exert themselves in their favour.

"Troops brought together in such a manner consist chiefly of genuine jail-birds, of rabble who are elsewhere taken under the protection of the state, and lead a pleasant life in the treadmills, houses of correction and other useful establishments. Who can expect honour and patriotism to influence the actions of these warriors: the stick must govern here, and it is employed with little hesitation. By degrees these savages are tamed, and when they are well accustomed to the new order of things, they receive their uniform, and are permitted to go out of barracks in charge of reclaimed vagabonds. The first attempts are always attended with risk, and are frequently followed by desertion. Usually, however, the recruit waits until he meets with a good opportunity of deserting his post; for he then has the advantage of carrying off his arms, the sale of which cover his travelling expences.

"It is hardly possible to conceive how numerous the desertions are after every recruiting, or rather on every possible occasion. They run off by dozens, endeavour to reach the solitudes, or farms far away from the beaten track, where they are sure of work and bread. This is especially the case with troops, who are sent to the coast-garrisons. Orders to march to a sea-port is for the native of the table-lands, almost equivalent to the sentence of death. The instinct of self-preservation, therefore, moves him to watch like a fox, for the best chance of escaping the snare. He quits the high-road, and has now won the game. No one pursues him; and the first night he removes far enough to venture to apply for food at some solitary farm. The people are compassionate, and cannot let the hungry traveller proceed without refreshment. The poor wretch complains of his hard fate, offers to work for his board, and is gladly accepted.

"Once I travelled in the suite of a general, who was escorted by fifteen dragoons and a trumpeter. After journeying three days, the whole escort had vanished, some with the horses, and finally the trumpeter derisively hung up his trumpet on a tree in front of his chief's quarters, and also disappeared. True they were part of a coast garrison, and the sickly season was approaching.

"It had frequently been seen and acknowledged that this method of completing the army was of little avail, and even Santanna endeavoured to introduce recruiting, by means of drawing lots, among young men of good character. He met with insuperable obstacles, partly arising from the unbounded dislike of the Mexicans to military service, partly from the circumstance that the fresh troops could not be mixed up with the old ones, if he desired to train a new generation, and that these class-soldiers could not be trusted apart, in consequence of his being universally disliked. Matters therefore remained as they were. The troops being once habituated to a barrack-life, frequently went on well, and served till old age came on. They became also, as I have already observed, excellent soldiers, fighting as well as Croats or Pandoors, with whom, in many respects, they may best be compared. My opinion, that with good officers a good army might be formed, is shewn by the history of warfare in all times, and therefore my prime object would be to make a careful selection among the officers and chiefs now serving, to send for some distinguished men from the different European states, and cause the art of war to be taught. Our army should be wholly reconstructed. One step was taken, not very long since, owing to which a vast number of officers disappeared from the lists. During the American war all were called upon to defend the country, with the threat that whoever failed to appear at the appointed time, should be considered to have taken his discharge. Not one half made their appearance, and all the absentees were struck off the army list. It was further perceived, that for 25 years the army had been a mere tool for the ambitious plans of unscrupulous generals; but that in case of need it could do nothing in defence of the country; that it was the ruin of Mexico, partly by the enormous expenditure it entailed (from 12 to 15 million dollars annually), partly by its faulty organisation; and the step was ventured upon of reducing it to a minimum. The national-guard was increased, and its statutes amended, military colonies were established on the northern frontier, partly to provide for the proletarians, who were now accustomed to active service, and partly to serve as a rampart against the irruptions of the Indians. All these are innovations, which are not yet completely carried out, which do not yet answer the purpose intended, but nevertheless are a step forward.

"You see, my dear Sir, I have afforded you a glance into our affairs, and have not concealed the weak sides. You will therefore no longer misunderstand what lately passed between me and the licentiate."

The short tropical twilight was over, and the beautiful constellation of the cross shone out superbly in the south over the towers of the city, as we entered the

streets. I heartily thanked my new friend for his information, and we parted highly gratified with each other.

The reading public, however, may not be completely satisfied, and I fancy I perceive many questions hovering on their lips; I will therefore offer a few concluding remarks.

Some years ago, if any one had been present at parade in the great square of Mexico on the occasion of a festival, and had heard one of Meyerbeer or Rossini's marches played, he would scarcely have believed himself on the table-land of the Andes. But on looking better at the soldiers, the dark-brown complexion of very many of them reminded him that he was in another quarter of the earth. The cut of the uniform was half French, half Spanish, sat well, but was exceedingly unpractical for such a country. The tight-fitting cloth uniforms, the white leathers, the heavy covering for the head, protecting neither from sun nor rain, are inconveniences, which are by degrees being got rid of in Europe, but which are quite unfitted for the tropics. The most practical dress would be a short blouse, wide trowsers, and a round hat, turned up a little on one side. The Indian and Mestizo is accustomed from childhood to wear neither waistcoat nor jacket, the uniform therefore restrains the freedom of his movements, and answers a contrary purpose to what is intended. This refers to the infantry. The cavalry might be equal to any in the world, if the existing elements were properly employed. The Mexican rides and is accustomed to the management of horses from youth upwards, moves with the greatest ease, whatever may be the nature of the country, and is a perfect master of the lance and the lasso. But he must have his convenient Mexican saddle and bridle, and a uniform corresponding with the picturesque riding-costume of the country. No attention has been paid to this. The Mexican sits badly in Hungarian and French saddles, such as are introduced for the army; the heavy head-piece, the tight red uniform and light blue trowsers inconvenience him sadly, and the same man, who with his own riding-equipage and national costume is as much at his ease as a circus-rider, makes no impression, is stiff and awkward. The horses of the country should be employed for light cavalry only. The Mexican breed is fiery and enduring, but of middling size only, unfitted for dragoons and cuirassiers.

For a long time the army was the expensive luxury of Mexico — the hobby of the presidents, who nearly all belonged to the military profession. The garrison-service of the capital, which might just as well be performed by a national-guard, numbers several battalions, and precisely these have the most elegant uniforms. They have extensive barracks, which are not exactly models of cleanliness. The men are not sufficiently occupied and drilled, gymnastic exercises are unknown, nor are there classes for instruction. Their idle life leads them to numerous excesses, the soldier continues his proletarian mode of life, and forms connections highly disadvantageous to discipline. If a battalion has to change its garrison, it is followed by a troop of women and children, more numerous than the battalion itself; they even

follow the soldiers to the field, hindering the manœuvres, consuming the provisions, and facilitating desertion.

All these evils have been repeatedly acknowledged by discerning officers, and proposals made for their abolition; but it is extremely difficult to effect innovations, because the best will of individuals is insufficient to overcome the inertness of the mass. The mixed population is also in the way. The Indians are attached to the soil, like the domestic animals to their stable, but they have no patriotism. They will not move unless by compulsion, their lives and way of thinking are stereotype, they find it impossible to extend the limited circle of their ideas.

The war with North America afforded the most distinct evidence of this. There was no talk of a popular rising, for the Indians remained wholly indifferent; in the larger cities only, some of the educated Creoles displayed a lively interest in the result. If the people had risen in defence of their country, Scott's army would have been annihilated. Old Elias Taylor advanced as a cautious soldier, carefully secured the possibility of retreat, and protected his flanks. But Scott penetrated from Vera Cruz into the interior by the sole high-road, across a difficult country, with numerous narrow passes, across a chain of mountains rising from ten to twelve thousand feet above the sea, some seventy leagues distant from his reserves and supplies. He would have been cut off from the coast, an insignificant guerilla party could have intercepted his communications, he must have been lost if the somewhat numerous population of the plateaux had united to attack him, or had refused to supply his wants. An incomprehensible military mistake turned out luckily for Scott; for more than a month he was left unmolested in this critical position, and had leisure to bring up his ammunition and reinforcements, and again take the offensive. The laurels which Scott gained, were owing less to his tactics and bravery, than to the weakness and indolence of his opponent. In the decisive struggle near the capital, several divisions of Mexicans fought with great bravery and resolution, namely at Churubusco; but the favorable moment was lost, the chief command without energy, and what was worse, without confidence, on account of its being in the hands of Santanna, who was incapable of exciting the least spark of enthusiasm.

The experience of late years force upon us the conviction, that the Indian population are unfit for war, as long as their intellectual development is not more cared for. They have therefore been as much as possible exempted from service, even in the national-guard, and doubtless the consideration may have had some weight, that it would not be altogether adviseable to arm this numerically larger portion of the population, who have not wholly forgotten that they were once the dominant race.

In general it is the Spanish-speaking portion of the inhabitants who have to bear arms, consequently the Creoles and Mestizoes, and as these have the greatest objection to military service, there will never be a good militia. In the state of Durango for instance, which for some years has had much to suffer from the Apaches, and still suffers, three hundred well-mounted men cannot be brought together; and these would be sufficient to seek the savages in their mountain-lairs, and render them

for ever innoxious. These predatory tribes never appear in large numbers; they come like the wind, thirty or fifty strong, attack the farms and villages, murder the men, carry off the women and children, and flee, driving the herds of cattle and troops of horses before them, as quickly as they came. The whole state trembles at this plague, mining and agriculture are at a stand-still, because nobody ventures to go far from the towns, and still there is not sufficient unity of purpose, to equip an efficient troop capable of protecting the general interests. For the very thinly populated state of Durango there may be some excuse owing to the great distance of the inhabited places from each other; but in the districts which are better populated the same thing is observed, which can naturally be caused by nothing but the most disgusting selfishness. If the people would act in concert, these annoyances would shortly cease; but every one fears to put himself forward, he has no wish to be on bad terms with any one; and even the authorities do not act 'ex officio', partly for want of support, partly fear for of incurring the hatred of the culprits.

This is not alike in all parts of the country; in the state of Vera Cruz, for instance, no suspicious people can settle, as the villagers and peasants quickly combine to hunt them down. In this state alone the guerillas fought incessantly against the North Americans, cut off many a convoy of food and ammunition, and hindered their operations by attacking them whilst on the march. Here, too, the Indians took no part in the struggle, but like jackals, prowled about the enemy's camp by night, to carry off their horses from the pasture.

XVIII.

THE PROLETARIANS OF MEXICO.

The Mexicans cities have their numerous and peculiar proletarians, as well as Naples and Seville; and the well-known lazzaroni have perhaps more skill in devouring maccaroni, but will scarcely represent their class so worthily as the Leperos (also called Pelados) in the west. In Europe it is very hard to be obliged to belong to this class, in Mexico it is deliberately chosen; no pressure of circumstances can hinder

the fredom of development, talent can display itself to the greatest advantage. In a country where the population is inconsiderable, and the territory extensive, strong arms are naturally at a premium. Whoeve ris willing, can find work; whoever wants land can have it; whoever pays Mother Earth some attention is richly rewarded for it. There ought therefore to be no proletarians in Mexico, it is not a necessary evil, and by means of good schools and a strict police might long since have been eradicated. But it would have been a pity; for a highl yrespectable part of the community would have been wanting, and the reading public had lost the ensuing sketch, doubtless to their profound grief.

The leperos are the proletarians in the strictest sense of the word. Epicureans on principle, they avoid the annoyance of work as much as possible, and seek for enjoyment wherever it may be obtained. The possession of house and farm produces cares, and it is inconvenient to lock up boxes and chests; therefore they decline troubling themselves about it. The whole individual, with all that he has about him, is not worth a groat, and yet he is in the best humour in the world, and ready to sing and dance. When evening comes, he rarely knows where to lay his head at night, nor how to fill his empty stomach in the morning. A shirt is an article of luxury, but agreeable as a reserve, in order to be able to pawn it, or to stake it, according to circumstances. If he is in luck he buys one, and a pair of trowsers of *manta* (cheap cotton-stuff). His chief possession is the 'frazada', a coarse striped cloth, protecting him against stabs or blows, his bed and counterpane for the night, his state-dress for church and market. This, his 'toga virilis' the lepero throws over his shoulder with more pathos, he produces a greater effect with it than formerly Cicero and Pompey, and should he eventually fall by the knife of an irritated foe, he does so with as much dignity as the great Cæsar on the ides of March. Sympathizing friends then wrap him in his royal robe, passing a cord round him like a bale of goods, and thus he wanders to the grave, simply as he lived. The lepero wears no shoes, first, because he has none, secondly because they cramp his motions, especially when he sees fit to run away. An old straw hat shelters him from the sun, a plaited carrying-girth and a rope protect him from the police, as they clearly shew him to be a porter. A rosary with a cross or a scapulary, worn on his bare chest, proves him to be a good Christian, and besides he attends mass, unless prevented by important business. Those who speculate on the contents of strange pockets never fail to appear at the great religious festivals, and are said to do a good stroke of business there. They are distinguished by their excessive piety and mortification, but nothing escapes their lynx-eyes, although they seem to be exclusively occupied with the prayer-book in their hands. But the arm is false, the hand holding the prayer-book is made of wax so as to defy detection, whilst beneath the cloak they operate freely with both hands, like the most practised juggler.

The wedded lepero has usually a little room in one of the suburbs, where he passes the night; the unmarried one trusts to chance. If he has had a good afternoon, or won at play in the evening, he remains in one of the numerous dens, if

not, he reposes under the church porch, or in one of the less frequented halls, unless the police convey him to the lock-up. Should the lodging be under the bright stars, society is usually to be met with, who huddle together to keep each other warm, for the nights are cool. Having stretched themselves and rubbed their eyes next morning, a visit is paid to a pulqueria or liquor-shop. Their means sufficing, a morning-wet is taken; if out of cash they seek by their wit to induce others to stand treat. Perhaps, too, there is a knife or a pocket-handkerchief (the latter is indispensable with all classes) to pawn, in order to break one's fast. The second desideratum is a cigar, and there these threadbare rogues stand, closely enveloped in their rugs, and hold council whither they shall direct their steps.

Whoever in the morning twilight has traversed the suburbs of Puebla, Mexico, Queretaro or Toluca, must have seen groups of these men, shawled up to the eyes, earnestly deliberating. Others are observed leaning against an angle, or seated on a stone, motionless as a statue. These last have their regular employment, or as old hands, disdain all counsel. The others disperse to the east and west, and commence their industrious career. Some place themselves before the gates of the churches as beggars, feign lameness, and endeavour in pitiful tones to excite the compassion of the church-goers. Others have made an agreement with certain blind men, whom they fetch, and lead through the streets. They take care of the funds, of course to their own advantage, but feed their menagerie well, as the receipts are not bad. Others wander about near the coffee-houses and shops, and pick up all the stumps of cigars thrown away by the smokers. They are dried and converted into cigaritos, which, the sale of tobacco being monopolized by the state, they secretly dispose of at a lower price. The greater part of the pickpockets and thieves push on for the market-place, the churches, the courts of justice, or wherever there is likely to be a sufficient crowd to offer a field for displaying their skill. Their prizes wander to a kind of bazar (baratillo), conducted by friends and colleagues.

One class of leperos make a better appearance than those already mentioned; they wear shoes, even a jacket, but are not a whit better than the others. They are the numerous brokers, who for a consideration offer all kinds of stuffs, cravats, hats, boots and shoes, spurs etc. for sale. They intrude more especially at the inns, where they enter the strangers' rooms, praise their wares, persuade the inexperienced to countenance them, steal whatever comes in their way, and are accomplices of the robbers, whom they acquaint with the time of departure, the probable amount of property, and the road of the unsuspecting travellers.

The best description of proletarians seek for work; they present themselves wherever building or other necessary labours are being carried on, in order to earn something as helps or day-labourers. These people, compared with the others, have a good fund of 'humbra de bien' or morality; they say of themselves: "God be thanked, hitherto we have not wandered from the right path; who can tell whether it will continue so?" With such principles they often have the good fortune to be engaged as porters, messengers, water-bearers etc., and if they are not led astray by bad

companions, who tempt them to play and lead a dissipated life, they occasionally become wealthy peasants or shopkeepers. He who has succeeded in becoming water-bearer (aguador), is on the way to higher dignities. For the water-carrier is admitted to the interior of the houses; he must be a decent fellow, and of comparatively refined manners, in order to remain in favour with the kitchen population. This is not over easy, when we consider the whims of Mrs. Cook and Miss Kitchen-maid. If he come too soon, it is not right, if too late, he is overwhelmed with reproaches, and must extricate himself skilfully from the difficult position. Thus: "Ah! you may welltalk Donna Crispina; but the fountain was so beset with my colleagues, that one couldn't get near it, and still not one drew water, because they all wanted to hear the singular story which old Hilario had to tell, and in which he had himself played a part. I didn't hear it quite to the end, filled my pitchers very quickly, aud ran here lest you should be angry." — "Oh! tell us the story!" cxclaim the maids. But the cook who has lost no time in putting a little pot of water on the fire to make chocolate, which has been asked for by hermistress, has not yet got over her bad humour, and angrily observes: "I waut water in my kitchen and no stories". The prudent water-bearer is careful not to answer in the same tone, and says: "As you please. I will bring water and be silent." Like a practised psychologist he slings his pitchers across his shoulders, convinced that the curiosity of Donna Cook is greater than her anger; nor is he mistaken. The cook stands in his way as though by accident, saying: "So sparing of your words, master! True, I have my whims, but you know me well enough to be aware, that it's not meant so badly. Look, there's your champurrado* in the porringer; sit down and drink, and then let us hear the news." — "That's just the way with you women", returns the waterman, "always on the high ropes, and finding fault with every one. Am I not here every morning with the sun, and don't I know everything that is going on in the whole town? Yes, when I have to carry messages to Don Juliano, then I am the good master and the dear master; but if the ladies are in a bad humour, then they don't even wish me good morning. Even I have a spark or two of ambition, and am now going; in fact I have already lost so much time on your account, that I could have served two customers." He pretends to be going, but the sight of the porringer, and the entreaties of the maids overcome his modesty; the water-jars are set down, there is a convenient seat on the hearth, and now the anxious public hear the last number of the Scandalous Chronicle.

The water-bearer is the confident in the houses of his customers; not only the porter converses with him, not only does the cook reserve a slice of the joint for him, and the kitchen-maid and parlour-maid entertain the highest opinion of him, but even the children of the house are fond of him, and the mistress consults him when she intends changing a maid, or taking a footman. He knows everything that happens in the town, and can give much information of what is going on

*) Champurrado is a mess of pounded maize and chocolate, which is drunk in the morning instead of coffee.

in the bosom of families even. Many a perfumed note is entrusted for delivery to his hand, many a pretty chambermaid gives him orders by word of mouth. But he never abuses this confidence, and stands up for the unsullied reputation of his patrons.

In the cities of the table-lands, especially in Mexico, the water-bearers have their peculiar dress; and are distinguished by a short leathern apron, a leathern back-piece, and a round leathern cap. The heavy water-jar is carried on the back, and held by a strap, passing over the forehead; a smaller jar is carried in front, attached to another strap, which is passed round the neck. The water-bearers of the coast-towns take it easier: they employ an ass or a mule to carry four small barrels, which are held together in a separate frame placed above the pack-saddle. All are desirous of procuring well-fed, handsome beasts, and appear themselves clean and well-clothed. It may therefore well be said: "that the profession of water-bearer is the noblest part of proletarianism, and the boundary-line of vagabondism."

For beneath the working leperos are the street-porters (cargadores). They stand either at the corners of frequented streets, surround the custom-houses and hotels, exhibit themselves in the market-place, tendering their services to all the passers-by. In the streets they call after every one who appears to have business in contemplation: "Do you want a servant", or "Voy mi (Shall I go, Sir)?" They are speedy aud useful, but mostly complete rascals, who, if employed, should never be lost sight of, lest they should suddenly disappear with the bundle they are carrying. Like John Caspar Lavater of yore, they are skilled in physiognomy, and can tell at a glance whether their customers will suffer themselves to be cheated. The inexperienced stranger, the countryman who comes up to town for the first time, village pastors and such like folks are agreeable acquaintance for them; they must assuredly pay their footing, and buy their experience at an unsatisfactory price.

These street-porters are a vicious race, dirty, dissipated, impudent in the highest degree; nothing is sacred in their eyes, they jest at everything, and have something to object to in every passenger. They kiss their hands to the ladies in the balconies, and make love to the nursery-maids. Brandy and gaming are their delight, and when in the noonday-heat they take their siesta in the shade of a high convent-wall, or stretched at full length enjoy their 'dolce far niente', then the cards are pulled out, and when these are wanting, some of their private stud of six-legged racers of the class Apteridæ, are pitted against each other, and betted upon just as an Englishman would bet on his full blood race-horse.

Here and there an honest fellow is met with among these vagabonds, who is abused by his comrades as a stupid devil, because he is occasionally so inconceivably absurd, as to carry purchases, entrusted to him by an unsuspecting peasant, to the place indicated, instead of casting them as a godsend into his own locker.

During the tropical rains in summer, it sometimes happens in the capital, that the drains get stopped up, when all the streets become inundated. On the raised foot-paths one can walk dry-footed, but from one street to the other the communi-

cation is interrupted. This is harvest-time for the street-porters; as living ferry-boats they carry across on their backs, from one corner to the other, all who are not barefooted like themselves; the lepero becomes the successor of St. Christopher, and for a *medio* wades through the troubled waters. After the theatre it is delightful to see these flying bridges (the heavy showers generally fall from eight till ten o'clock in the evening); there is no choice, even ladies must mount this two-legged horse, at the risk of exposing a pretty calf. This would be a trifle, if other awkward intermezzoes did not frequently happen. In the middle of the water (especially with ladies) the porters haggle about the price, and if their demands are not complied with, threaten an involuntary bath. Or perhaps friends of these beasts of burden, equally rogues, take advantage of the defenceless state of the burdens, to lighten them of their shawls, bonnets, pocket-handkerchiefs, or whatever else a practised angler may catch with his five fish-hooks, whilst in the confusion, splashing and rush of waters, no one hears the protestations of the victims.

These rascals, too, sometimes employ genuine fish-hooks, which, attached to a strong cord, they let down from the flat roof of a house; unobserved, his accomplice hooks it into the cloak of a passer-by, and suddenly, as if by magic, the garment mounts into the air. Once I saw this, on issuing from the theatre: a cloak soared heavenwards, and the unlucky terrestrial, who beheld it quitting his shoulders, leaped despairingly into the air, stretched forth both his arms, and cursed his hard fate, which was rendered still harder by the shouts of laughter and jests of the lookers-on. Before the police could be found, and the roof examined, the fortunate angler had long since escaped.

The wandering cobblers (remendones) also belong to the class of genuine proletarians. They have seen better days in their youth, and have now arrived at the conviction, that the whole earth is vanity. They hold liberty in great estimation, and therefore work under no master; neither can they bear to sit long, and wander from choice. Early in the morning, Crispin sets out with a little basket on his arm; he enters the court-yards of the larger houses, and cries with a deep, brandy-voice, and with long-drawn tones his *remendár* (mend). The house-porter and the other servants know him. "Sit down, master, under the portico", cries one, "there is something for you to do." The old fellow now empties his basket, producing nippers and awl, pieces of leather, thread, bristles and the indispensable cobbler's wax. While dressing a gaping wound in the coachman's boot, he tells the story of his misfortunes, a story purely imaginative as may be supposed. "I was with General Bravo", he says, "when he beat the Spaniards, three days after I had made the general a fine pair of boots. 'Tiburcio' says he, tapping me on the shoulder, 'look', says he, 'to-day I've got on my new boots, which fit like a glove', says he; 'to-day the Spaniards shall feel my sword, and you shall ride near me, and if you fight well, you shall be made a lieutenant.' That was a glorious day, and I might now be a general, or at least a colonel, if my confounded hack had not fallen with me, and

broken my leg. So you see, I wasn't able to display my bravery, and there was an end of my soldiership, for my leg remained twisted, as you now see it."

More shoes are brought, which receive vast patches, whilst he relates anecdotes, which delight the public. He utters many a soft speech to the maids, praises the cook's little foot, who gratefully supplies him with a piece of bread and meat.

Having placed the house on a better footing, he removes, and his 'remendar' is again heard, gradually receding, till its mellow tones are lost in the distance.

Full-blood proletarians hawk newspapers, pamphlets, play-bills and lottery-tickets. They push on usually with rapid steps through the main-streets, crying their wares, often with exceeding humour or even satire, as:

"Fivepence for the great deeds of Santanna!" Similar gentry are engaged as 'coymes' or croupiers in the small gaming-houses; at horse-races or cock-fights they offer the bets, carry the cocks in and out, fasten on the steel spurs, in short anything and everything pertaining to gambling.

The worst description of proletarians are the ruined sons of wealthy parents, pettifogging lawyers, discharged copyists, broken lieutenants, and bankrupt shopkeepers. These people are a thorough plague for the country, the cause of frequent disorders and abuses, even of revolutions. Formerly, still, when the Spaniards held undisputed possession of the colonies, it was no uncommon occurrence for Gachupines*, owing to the great advantages enjoyed by Europeans in commerce, to acquire large fortunes. Many of them could neither read nor write; they usually married the daughter of a Spaniard, possessed of some dowry, and increased their property by diligence and perseverance, but never thought of teaching their children anything worth learning, or of seriously rendering them acquainted with business. At the same time the old man was miserly and surly, the young man, as a Creole, thoughtless and fond of pleasure. In his childhood he was constantly with the servants, learned every kind of vice, was always defended by the feeble mamma, even when he had robbed his father; and when at length the latter closed his eyes in death, the son hastened at full gallop to ruin. The children of these unfortunate sons enjoyed some years of opulence, and learned nothing but what was bad; their education was limited to reading, writing, and simple arithmetic, and the parents speedily becoming poor, rendered them genuine proletarians. Hence the Mexican proverb:

El padre comerciante
El hijo paseante
El nieto medicante.

That is to say: The father a merchant, the son a walking-gentleman, the grandson a beggar.

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* In the popular dialect 'Gachupin' means Spaniard; fuom the Azteo 'Cactli' shoe, and 'chopinia' prickle, consequently 'cactchopin' prickleshoe, a name, which the Indians gave to the spurred Spaniards.

In every town, even in every larger village, one meets with living proofs of the truth of this proverb; people, who by colour belong to the higher class of society, unacquainted with work, and without the least desire to exert themselves. They play the guitar, dance, sing, are skilled in games of hazard, even to the minutest detail, talk of horses in the most masterly style, of fighting-cocks as connoisseurs, are unscrupulous seducers of young females, are never missing at a dance, or a festival, and yet every one knows, that they possess nothing but what they carry on their backs. Their constant endeavour is to obtain a 'destinito', that is, a place, a situation. Through the recommendation of friends and relations they are employed as shop-men, but rarely keep their places long, as they share the receipts with their principal, who is so little satisfied with the proceeding, that he soon dismisses them. As clerks and copyists in the courts of justice, in the town-council, and in the major's office, they are often smuggled in, and if nothing else will succeed, they must try for a place as sub-overseer in agricultural or mining operations; or as schoolmaster to the Indians. Wherever they are, they bring nothing good in their train; they are dissipated immoral scoundrels, who strew tares amongst the wheat.

Many of this description never quit the cities, and these are the genuine swindlers. Gaming, and usually with false dice or secreted cards, is their principal resource; but this can only be carried on by night, so that by day, they have time to think of other matters. They are for the most part dressed like the whites, though poorly perhaps, have very glib tongues, and leisure enough to study every imaginable part. Under the piazzas, in the coffee-houses and inns they find opportunities of ensnaring strangers. They talk of business, conduct those who are desirous of making purchases to the shops, help them to choose, bargain for them, and are obliging in every way. The tradesman is satisfied with the business done, and duly receives his payment; the purchaser wishes to keep up his connection with the house, and promises to send further orders. The swindler is present the whole time, and the tradesman fancies him a relation of the customer. The latter now returns to his village, exceedingly grateful towards the kind friend, who has so disinterestedly served him. The friend, however, has asked for his address, is in possession of his hand-writing, and takes advantage of this to forge letters, in which more goods are ordered, which the tradesman is to hand over to the cousin. He receives the goods, and disappears from this quarter of the city. Even should the cheat be recognized, the property is irrecoverably lost.

Bills and receipts are forged in a similar manner, and the money obtained for them. Usually small sums are borrowed of their new acquaintances; only five piastres for an hour, as they have unluckily forgotten their purses. "I don't want to go all the way home, you need feel no anxiety, you shall have it again almost immediately." If you give it, it is lost; but if you say positively: "I never lend money", they resume: "I would offer you my watch as security, were I not afraid of offending a gentleman like yourself. My word is sacred; but it is true, I have not the honour of being known to you; I could name you some of the first men in the city,

who would unhesitatingly advance me a thousand pesos, and you are anxious about a trumpery five, which I should not refuse my lackey. Give me at least three."

Whoever is curious to hear all the turns and shifts resorted to by this industrious class, should quietly refuse, and the amount required will gradually diminish to a dollar. Should one then angrily reply: "I'll lend you nothing at all; here you have two reals, and now leave me in peace and quietness", he will haughtily wrap himself in his cloak with the words: "I am not accustomed to receive alms!" Nevertheless he will take it, with the remark, that he will give it to the first beggar, and returns thanks in his name only.

Inexperienced countrymen, who have to fight out a law-suit, may thank their stars, if having fallen into the hands of these fellows, they escape without being ruined. They constitute themselves lawyers, employ legal phrases, read highly interesting documents to their clients, and let themselves be well paid for it. First there must be an advance for stamps and dues, then fees for looking at the acts etc.; thus the matter is spun out for months, and if chance should not open the eyes of the dupe, the careful lawyer devours all his goods and chattels. Roguery of this description is naturally punished, if it can be proved; but the cheats are cunning, and generally know how to keep out of sight, when a storm threatens.

The right honourable guild, which we have just described, give birth to a posterity which is almost invariably lost, and even the fathers frequently end as bandits or highwaymen. I should be unjust towards them, did I not observe that occasionally a nobler ambition induces them to struggle upwards, and by diligence and honesty to regain the position in society, which the levity of the parents has sacrificed.

Away with grave reflections! The sky is blue, the air is mild, no winter with its snow, no desert with its simoom! Where nature is so hospitable and produces in such abundance, where even the birds build slighter nests than in the rude north, how can man do otherwise than lead a more careless life than elsewhere! In the tropics to-day is enjoyed without any thought of to-morrow; and he who is possessed of the happy temperament to enjoy the fleeting hour, should perhaps be left to enjoy it undisturbed.

The proletarian of a tropical country does not consider his lot hard; he has no desire to change, and a festival is for him a day of the golden age. Enter the cities of Mexico at Christmas, or on All-Saints' Day, look well at the people who at night crowd into the squares, and the wrinkles of care, the demon of want are not perceptible. On Christmas-Eve the public squares are lighted with pine-torches, the handsome and the ugly move backwards and forwards between long streets of booths, which are covered with flowers and green leaves, and contain a delicious selection of fruits, confectionery, spirituous and refreshing liquors. The Christmas-tree and the presents for the children are not known to the people of Romaic origin, scarcely even among the Britons, and still old and young rejoice in Christmas-Eve. Thus it is also in Mexico.

The stars shine so bright in the cloudless sky, that a walk through the town is gladly undertaken for the benefit of the children, who are very anxious to proceed to the market-place. In most cities Christmas-Eve would be incomplete without games of chance, and these, licensed by the police, are carried on at numerous tables both in and outside the booths. Here and there you try your luck at roulette, cards or lotto, but the 'polacas', a description of lotto, are most liked. The prizes are ribands, pocket-handkerchiefs, little rings and chains, glass, china, and even sweet-meats. Music resounds on all sides, singing and dancing are the order of the evening, rockets are sent up, and every one is in his best humour.

The lepero is enthusiastic for these classical festivals: he dresses himself almost like a bridegroom, his hat is adorned with a new riband, or a silk handkerchief is passed round it instead, his shirt has actually been washed, his otherwise tangled locks are partially combed, and are certainly less elf-like; he has spent a *medio* (about twopence-halfpenny), in order to convert the crusts of dirt, dust and soot which had stood in bold relief on his face, neck and hands, into the natural brown. His toga is thrown over his shoulder with regal dignity; he has his buskins on, for at his side is the idol of his heart, his *China* his *Chata* (his curly-head, his turn-up nose, or *nez retroussé*), the flower of the street, his worthy Dulcinea.

Hitherto we have not mentioned the dualism of the proletarians, and yet it is absolutely necessary to speak of it here. Whilst striving and labouring throughout the day, he appears alone, and is never seen in female society except perhaps at dinner. Many of them are duly married, according to the rites of the church; but the majority certainly not. They feel, however, the necessity of sharing their lot with a gentler being, and surely this may be achieved, as there are plenty of damsels of their class, who, like the male leperos, are enamoured of freedom. Their fortunes are easily united. They meet after the fatigues of the day, and share whatever they may have picked up. Without the blessing of the priest, they live perhaps happier than with it; for as both parties are free, they remain united only so long as inclination prompts. This is the social philosophy of the lepero. In general matters, much as he is inclined to communism, his jealous nature renders him an opponent of the system on this point. If, therefore, the proletarians are met with at the nocturnal festivals, as if they had issued from Noah's ark, we know what is meant by it. Friends are greeted, the most formal and polite speeches are made, as though they were so many mandarins. "Cavalier, how are you, how is your amiable lady? Your grace seems to be in an ill humour, you look like a week in Lent! Oh! Señorita, rouse him a little! Let us drink a glass of something sweet, something that the ladies will like, etc." In the liquor-booths, these happy couples become very animated, their faces become flushed, there is abundance of wit, the fair sex lay aside every appearance of prudery and coldness, are always ready with an answer, and although they modestly conceal their faces with their shawl, when the glass is raised to their sweet lips, the inferior quality of the liquid proves that they imbibe no small quantity of it, to produce so striking a result.

They now begin to play; the gallant cavaliers put down the stakes, and the winnings are handed over to their charmers. The latter also act independently, and shew that they are emancipated; they stake medio after medio, and with cigar in mouth, take their places at the play-table. The vile conversation carried on by this scum of society, may easily be imagined.

The night rarely ends without quarelling and bloodshed; rival ladies meet, or one rascal rouses the jealousy of another; they sneer at each other, become excited and proceed to abuse, until two fierce champions, their cloaks wrapped about their left arms, draw their knives on each other. No one interferes; the fight is quietly regarded, or the combatants incited, until one suddenly falls, exclaiming: "Jesus me valga (Jesus protect me)". The other coolly wipes the blood from his knife, saying: "I didn't want to quarrel; for I'm uncommonly peaceable; but consider, he abused my mother, and I can't stand that!" All disappear incontinently, in order not to fall into the hands of the police; only the mistress of the wounded man remains, embraces him, sobs bitterly, and with her handkerchief endeavours to stop the effusion of blood.

No popular festival, no church consecration, no marriage takes place in the suburbs, without some of the leperos wounding or killing each other. The magistrates are at a loss to find quarters for all those who are arrested, and as there are no Houses of Correction, the prisons become perfect seminaries of vice. At the bar they speak with as much eloquence as if they had studied at the Paris Court of Assizes; they are so innocent, so candid, so modest. "Your worship", they say, "I am not fond of speaking of myself, and detest singing my own praise; but, here I must say, I am a thoroughly honest man, and would rather speak against myself, than inculpate another." Whoever begins thus, is an undoubted rascal, and every word he utters a lie.

Police matters, and the administration of justice demand a thorough reform. Nothing is done to prevent crime, and punishment so rarely ensues, that it can hardly be wondered at if vice and crime flourish to an extent that does incalculable injury to the healthy portion of the community.

It would be easy to complete these *genre* pictures of the lower classes, by various groups, which would offer a better subject for the pencil of a modern Teniers, than market-scenes and drinking-bouts. Hither belong the evangelists, whom we have already mentioned, the flymen and the muleteers, who are said, in their manners and language, to have been materially influenced by their four-footed charges. They are, however, a stout race: not up to all the tricks of the urban leperos, and therefore often victimised by them, especially at play. If a troop of *arrieros* (muleteers) have put up their *recua* (string of mules) at an inn, they are sure to find some leperos, who apparently take no notice of the guests, and sit in a corner playing with a greasy pack of cards. Presently some of the guests look on, are soon induced to take part in the game, and the unsuspecting leather jackets mostly yield up the fruit of a long journey to these rogues. Knowing every card in their pack by some outward

sign, they boldly launch into expence, call for liquor and consume no small quantity. To be sure, it now and then happens, that a *latino* (an old practitioner) is among the arrieros, who discovers the cheat, and now the leperos are overwhelmed with a shower of blows and cuffs, more even than an ass could endure; their pockets are emptied, and they unexpectedly find themselves in the open air.

Before closing our account of the honourable guild of leperos, we ought not to omit mentioning that there are many quiet harmless groups; under this head belong the gatherers of candle-ends, scavengers, convent-porters, factory labourers, and many others. It might fatigue the reader to enter into particulars, we will close the chapter, therefore with a brilliant episode of their public life.

On the 16th September, the anniversary of the acknowledgment of independence (or on some other holiday), a great bull-fight is advertised. The lepero deems this the acmé of felicity, and lays aside all thoughts of work. Several hours before the entertainment begins, dense groups besiege the gates of the great circus. In many cities stone buildings are erected for the purpose, after the model of the ancient Roman amphitheatre, mostly oval, and large enough to accommodate many thousand persons. It would be superfluous to describe the bull-fight, which differs not materially from those of Spain. In the great circus of Mexico, the arena is enclosed by a strong partition of beams and planks, about seven feet high; beyond the partition is a space five feet in width, and then come the tiers of boxes and benches. All the unwashed are admitted into this intervening space for a mere trifle, and many of them, as may be well imagined, are cunning enough to slip in for nothing. They see very badly, and must content themselves with peeping through the cracks in the boards, or through holes which they have effected by pushing out an occasional knot. Some of them climb up the beams or poles, and these are well off. The trumpets announce the beginning of the fight; the heroes on horse and foot exhibit their skill; the clown cracks his jokes, and finds a multitudinous echo among the proletarians, who envy him his distinguished position; the matador ends the disgustingly cruel scene, in order to begin it anew. The bulls play their part nobly, they have already killed several horses, and two or three men have been carried from the arena. Here comes a bull who declines to attack, and who is hooted for being a bad actor. "A la cola (to the tail)" shout the multitude, and the picadores, or mounted champions follow him round the circus; one seizes his tail, others wound him with the lance, until the frightened animal, rendered desperate, bounds, with a terrific bellow, over the high barrier. Here the knights of the *pavé* are densely crowded; no courage can avail against the monster; all seek safety in disorderly flight, and whole rows are overthrown, trampled upon and gored. The activity with which the mob clamber up anything that offers the remotest chance of escape, the shouts and cries proceeding from the crowded barrier, can only be compared with the flight of a troop of apes, amongst whom a shot has been fired, whilst they were harmlessly at play in the forest, on the ground. The delight of the public is unbounded, the clapping of

hands, the shouts of bravo and the laughter are incessant; whilst even the involuntary actors, as soon as the enemy has disappeared, jeer at the sufferers.

But now the important moment approaches, when on a signal given by the first alcalde of the city, the trumpets sound, and announce, that our leperos may appear as *volunteers* in the arena. Like a swarm of ants, the whole population of the lobbies, if we may so term the space already frequently alluded to, climb over the barriers, and the arena is completely filled with a choice selection of ragged vagabonds. Each of these brown, shabby fellows, holds his cloak in readiness, as the toredores hold their red cloth, in order to cast it over the eyes of the intruding bull. The trumpets sound again — and through the opened gates rushes an enormous bull, who shews plainly enough, that he has no mind to let himself be teazed with impunity. To prevent accidents the tips of his horns have been sawn off, and the ends carefully and securely padded. Like the corn beneath the scythe of the reaper, the leperos fall beneath the blows of the animals. The practised hands attack him with all the skill of the toredores; they parry the blow with their cloaks, but the crowd and the confusion are so great, that they and many others are overthrown. The timid prudently fly towards the raised *spina,* in the centre of the arena, but the foe often overtakes them, and the shouts and jeers of the others exhibit their intense delight. The most ridiculous accidents occur: in spite of all his hard blows and knocks, the lepero is always on his legs, and is never tired of trying his luck again. At length whole masses of leperos hang on to the tail and horns of the bull; they are shaken off like chaff, and dispersed; and if the mayor did not at length give the signal to close the sports, they would get the animal down, even though it cost more broken ribs, bleeding heads, and extraction of teeth without the aid of the dentist.

The whole entertainment is like a vile dream, like the struggle of the gnomes and dwarfs against a savage giant; but in the mode of performance the invincible humour of the people is evinced.

The same theme is varied in numerous ways. For instance a number of tables are placed in the arena with all kinds of dishes, such as the leperos patronize; they take their seats and begin to feed heartily. All at once ruin breaks in upon them: the grim bull gallops among the tables, overthrowing leperos, dishes and benches, and compelling all to seek safety in hurried flight. The funniest part of this is to see how each endeavours to save something from the wreck: a plate, a piece of roast meat, or at least some sweetmeats; delay brings the foe upon him, and the dishes with their bearers roll in the dust.

Occasionally instead of the tables, well greased climbing-poles are erected, at the top of which are handkerchiefs, watches, shoes etc., as prizes. When the crowd about the climbing-poles is densest, the ox is admitted, and now fear and avarice produce the drollest struggles.

Jumping in sacks also occasionally constitutes part of the amusements. But the blind hunt throws the lepero into ecstacies of delight. Half a dozen blind leperos enter the arena, and the same number of pigs, each with a little bell about its neck.

The blind men have sticks in their hands, and if they can succeed in striking a pig, they receive it as a prize. The sound of the bell betrays the whereabouts of the pig; and it frequently happens that several blind men go after the same pig, and let their blows fall on each other, instead of on the porker, which is, of course, the climax of the joke in the eyes of the proletarian public.

In conclusion we may observe that the proletarians consist almost exclusively of Mestizos, and that the Indians, poor as they seem to be, as peasants, landowners, mechanics, and as members of a community, are not to be regarded as proletarians. The Indian honestly supports himself and his family, pays his taxes, lives in wedlock, and does not leave his village to wander about at random like the lepero proper, whose numbers are mainly recruited by illegitimate children, and who are decidedly worst in the larger cities!

Two men, proved during their excellent administration, that this description of proletarianism may in a short time be eradicated, and rendered useful to the state; they were Count Revilla-Gigedo, viceroy in Mexico from 1789 till 1794, whose memory is still held in the greatest esteem, and General Miguel Tacon, governor-general in Cuba, some twenty years since. The position of the latter was uncommonly difficult, as in the Havannah he had to do with a most vile description of proletarians, consisting of negroes and mulattoes; and with a dissipated unruly nobility. With severity, but with impartiality, he compelled both to submit implicitly to the laws; and brought forth results, which astounded everybody.

Fortunate, indeed, were it for Mexico, if at the head of her government, she had a president boasting of the wisdom of Revilla-Gigedo, and of the firmness of Tacon!

XIX.

THREE FESTIVALS.

PASSION-WEEK, CORPUS-CHRISTI, ALL SOULS.

With most nations, festivals are connected with their religious worship, and such occasions offer the best opportunity of studying the manners and customs of the country. In Mexico, the religious festivals have assumed a peculiar character; Indian customs have been in part retained, and are most singularly interwoven with the

ceremonies as practised in Europe. These peculiarities, however, must not be sought for in the cities, for on the whole surface of the earth, civilization there levels ancient customs, and fashion scorns that which in distant country towns and villages is still regarded as sacred. Let us therefore proceed to the mountains, and there, in a mining-town of the lofty Andes, take part in a festival in all its ancient pomp.

In order to celebrate Passion-Week, every one seeks to return to his native place, but not with empty pockets. When the time approaches, even the idlest work hard; for it is considered sad indeed not to be able to spend a few dollars during the festive season. The different villages vie with each other in their preparations, in order to surpass each other in splendour. At length Palm Sunday arrives, and with it a succession of entertainments. A procession represents the entrance of the Saviour into Jerusalem; a wooden image of Christ, seated on an ass-foal, is borne through the village to the church at the porch of which it is welcomed with triumphant hymns, palm-boughs and flowers being strewn before it. The Indian calls his image "San Ramos", and esteems it highly, perhaps on account of his favorite animal. Every one takes home a palm-branch, for it has wondrous power, and in the form of a cross, is fastened to the cottage-door, to ward off evil, more especially lightning.

The Holy Week has begun, the confessionals are occupied from morning till night, every one seeks to fulfil the duties imposed upon him by the church, few, unhappily, endeavour to avoid frivolity. In order that a solemn frame of mind may be induced, early in the morning and late in the evening, the most lugubrious music is heard in the village; it is a little Indian drum, and a fife, which accompanies the monotonous beat with long-drawn tones. This the simplest of plaintive music (the fife has but three notes) is relieved by the solemn tones of the chirimia, a kind of trumpet, eight to ten feet in length, with a large mouth-piece at the thin end. The peculiarity of this instrument is, that the tone is produced by drawing in the breath; there are no holes or keys, and the modulation is effected by compressing the lips, forming thus a kind of musical ventriloquism. The performer on this original instrument must have good lungs, and, by reason of the length of the trumpet, be tall and strong. Whilst in motion the breath cannot be drawn in, he therefore halts, leans far back, in order to obtain a horizontal position for his instrument, and brings forth the most doleful notes, quite calculated to wake the sleepers in their graves.

The village streets have all been swept, and the roads repaired, horse and foot exercises have been undertaken; the schoolmaster is almost in despair at some young fellows, whom he has endeavoured to teach a dialogue in verse, but who have invariably forgotten in the morning what they have learnt in the evening; and the priest sighs in confidence to his curate: "How I wish there were no holy weeks!" The women, in a state of excitement, hurry to the house of Donna Philomena, who as the highest authority in taste, must give her advice about the costume of the angels. The Mater dolorosa has her hair dressed, the Jesus Nazareno is brushed and varnished; in short everybody has something to attend to, as the whole village

assists in representing the Passion. In the evening penance sermons are heard, religious exercises are performed, and an occasional night-procession takes place; but all merely as the introduction to the actual festival, which begins with Maundy-Thursday. Divine service commences at daybreak, for the number of those who receive the sacrament is very great.

The authorities wash the feet of the poor; blind persons are generally preferred to this honour. Then the last solemn mass takes place, and as a sign that Christ is betrayed and taken prisoner, the key of the tabernacle containing the host, attached to a broad riband, is hung round the neck of the alcalde by the priest. The service is over at noon, the bells must now be silent, the organ must peal no longer. In the afternoon the appearance of the interior of the church is changed, the altars are hung with black, on either side of the high altar, so-called monuments are erected, tall pyramids of cypress or pine-branches, firmly interwoven, and adorned with countless flowers and fruits, especially oranges, and with everything that the village can produce in the shape of plate, china, glass, bowls, basins, bottles and candlesticks. The whole is adorned with hundreds of tapers and lamps, and is the pride of the village, the wonder and admiration of strangers.

While these preparations are making in the principal church, the Mount of Olives is being adorned near a chapel at some distance. A quantity of green trees and branches are arranged, to as to represent a garden, in the midst of which a niche is formed of denser foliage, hung round with festoons and garlands. At sunset, the villagers in procession bring the large image of the "Nazarene" habited in violet-coloured silk, or velvet, and with long curls, to the great niche or arbour in the Garden of Olives. The Indians who have constructed smaller niches, bring also their images of the Saviour, and duly instal them. Dense clouds of incense rise, for the Indians love this offering, which in the time of their forefathers burnt day and night round the temple of their gods, and were never suffered to go out. The apostles, too, make their appearance, either as statues, or in the shape of amateurs from the village, dressed in character.

When night comes on, the people crowd about the Mount of Olives, silence is required, and the priest ascends a pulpit, covered with green boughs and flowers, at the porch of the chapel. A dim light from variegated lanterns sheds a magic illumination over the garden; the apostles are extended asleep. "There they lie", exclaims the preacher, "and sleep, forgetful of their Lord, whose soul is oppressed with vast anxiety, and already Judas approaches, the vile reprobate, the scum of mankind, the pride of hell. Watch and pray, fellow Christians, the hour of trial approaches; see, see, the monster comes, etc." The clash of arms is heard — the armed men come with swords and staves, Judas at their head, a lantern in his hand, and with a terrific mask; he approaches Christ in the arbour, and tenders the traitor-kiss. The preacher harangues at the top of his voice; all is in vain; the vile crowd attack the innocent lamb, and bind his hands behind his back; the terrified apostles disperse, Peter alone presses forward, to the great delight of the people draws his broad

wooden sword, and smites off a huge pasteboard ear from the skull of the servant Malchus. The armed men raise their victim, and place him in the midst of them; the apostles follow, succeeded in endless procession by the crowd, with burning tapers; all proceed slowly through the streets to the parish church, where the prisoner is cast into the dungeon, viz. into a side-chapel of the church, decorated with wire-work.

Late at night the crowd retire from the market-place, after a strange exhibition of piety and frivolity. Few days in the year offer equal facilities for amorous rendez-vous; night and the crowd baffle the strictest watchfulness of mothers, and deceive the jealous eyes of husbands. Devotion and profanation go hand in hand, and even gaming and drunkenness accompany the exposition of the Most High.

On the morning of Good Friday the rattle of the parish calls to early prayer, and the time is filled up with devotional exercises, until about noon, when the captive Saviour is conducted in procession to the house of Pilate, a chapel bearing this name. A wondrous troop of horse and foot forms the escort, warriors with glancing helmets and breast-plates, preceded by the centurion, whose horse must be a well-trained animal, superbly caparisoned, with gilt hoofs, and gloriously tricked out with ribands and spangles. Near him are full-length figures, representing the high-priests, Pharisees and Levites, with awful long-nosed masks and flowing garments. The image of the Saviour is conveyed to the chapel, at the porch of which, the priest explains the continuation of the story till Pilate's sentence, and the "ecce homo".

In the afternoon, the culminating point of the whole festival, the crucifixion procession begins. The monotonous music of drum and fife, and of the chirimia open the march, then follow in pairs the penitents and the ascetics, consisting partly of repentant sinners, partly of paid actors, in order to render the procession more imposing. These are shockingly repulsive groups, quite calculated to disfigure the poetry of religious enthusiasm with the hobgoblins of monkish ascetism. We behold penitents in shrouds, the head completely covered with a thick black veil, the hands and feet fettered; they are followed by others in the Sanbenito, the dreadful garb of the inquisition, with their hands tied behind, and with a rope about their necks. The head is surmounted with a tall conical cap, covering the face, but with round openings for the eyes. These are succeeded by half-naked penitents wearing the crown of thorns, prickly plants hanging down their backs, and skulls in their hands; whilst others march bent double, bearing crosses of human bones in their fettered hands.

The penitents are closely followed by the image of the Saviour bearing the cross, surrounded by the Roman guards and the Pharisees. The figure is provided with a mechanical apparatus, so that, by pressing a spring it bends its knees. A procession of devotees follow: first men, then women, carrying an image of the Holy Virgin. Children walk by their side, dressed as angels, partly with wings of white feathers, partly with Psyche wings of stiff paper which have not the most ætherial appearance. The favored disciple John is also borne by women, and accompanied by angels, the procession being closed by a crowd of men.

In the great square in front of the church, a pulpit is erected against one of the houses, which is ascended by the best preacher, as soon as the procession approaches. He continues to describe the story of the Passion, represents in the most appalling light the treachery of the Pharisees, and the wickedness of the Jews, which surpassed the limits of all imaginable cruelty, by the condemnation of the innocent God. Behold, the centurion rides up, with a paper at the end of his lance; he presents it to the orator, who unfolds and reads it; it contains the death-warrant of Jesus; possessed with a holy enthusiasm, he tears it, and scatters the pieces to the wind. Every lever of the soul is set in motion: "He had to suffer that for us unworthy sinners, for us he was burthened with the cross! See, see, they drag him hither, see, his strength is exhausted, he sinks beneath the burthen, your sins weigh heavily upon him." And the knees of the figure actually give way beneath it; the women conceal their eyes in their handkerchiefs, and sob loudly, whilst the men strike their faces to shew their contrition; the Indians in particular, give themselves hard blows, so that the noise of slapping for some moments drowns the tones of the sermon. Simon of Cyrene is at hand, and supports the image, which has fallen on its knees, but the action is thrice repeated, and affords the preacher superior opportunities of raising or depressing the feelings of his congregation. When the image of the Virgin is borne past, he describes the grief of the mother for her son, and draws forth showers of tears; he also lets John, the faithful disciple speak, until the whole procession has disappeared within the church.

The impression produced on the minds of a southern people, are powerful but transient. As long as the sermon lasted, signs of grief and contrition were not wanting, sighs and groans were heard; but all is wafted away with the last words of the priest. As the groups issue from the church, they crowd about the hawkers of *mammea,* a large fruit which ripens about Easter; the outside is grey, the inside red or yellow, and by reason of its sweet aromatic flavour, a favorite fruit of the Mexicans. It is not hunger that induces them to purchase, nor is it a fancy for dainties; but it is the love of gaming. Two bet on this fruit, and the bet is won by him whose mammea has most red flesh. Laughing and shouting, quarrelling and making-up now replace tears and penitence. During a sermon, I have even seen small groups cowering on the ground, occupied with their favorite game, despite the devotion, which at the proper moment induced them to slap their faces.

If the bright side of life went not hand in hand with all that is serious, the exciteable Southron would be overwhelmed by the gloomy impressions of the Passion Week. Like a child he laughs and weeps in the same minute; with renewed vigour and with cheerful countenance he goes to his church again in the evening, is delighted with the splendidly illuminated monument, hears the 'stabat mater', and waits for the priest, who once more enters the pulpit. He gives the text of another act of the Passion drama, the elucidation of a living picture. A curtain is withdrawn, and the crucified Saviour is beheld magically lighted up, the two thieves on either side; all is over; the woe-begone mother and John stand dissolved in tears at the foot of the

cross; the bleeding wounds are pointed out, inflicting equally severe wounds in the hearts of the spectators, who are roused to penitence, and mercilessly beat their bosoms and faces. The body is laid in a coffin with a glass lid, and is followed to the sepulchre by a long procession, accompanied by solemn music. There in the chapel, which is dimly lighted with coloured glass lamps, many pray most devoutly, many are childishly delighted with the faint violet light.

The close of this fatiguing day is a procession of women at 11 o'clock at night, which is intended to express the sympathy of the sex with the bereaved mother Mary. It is a beautiful sight to observe the long rows of burning torches proceeding slowly through the darkness; the tranquillity of nature is broken by no sound, save the occasional plaintive cry of the chirimia. Not every breast, however, is filled with holy peace, for in some a terrestrial fire burns far stronger than the mild celestial light, and many a fair penitent disappears from the procession, on the arm of an expectant admirer.

It is long past midnight before the people repose from the impressions of the day, and with the rising sun the clouds of gloom and sadness vanish. It is the Saturday of rejoicing (Sabado de gloria), the end of Lent, the forerunner of the Resurrection. The good humour of the Mexican may again run riot, and he begins in the morning by loudly giving vent to his restrained feelings. Judas, the arch-rogue must be punished, he must hang, he must burst, he must expire in fire and smoke. Judases are now constructed, awful figures, filled with crackers, squibs and rockets, and hung up by long ropes across the streets. Some put cats inside, or frogs and lizards, and all anxiously await the tenth hour. Suddenly all the bells peal forth, the touch-paper of all the Judases is lighted, and a most infernal uproar is produced by the explosion of the fireworks and the shouts of the multitude. The great and small children are delighted when the betrayers burst; the cats bound away with agonized screams, whilst with the remains of the stuffed figures a huge bonfire is made, encircled by the spectators with song and dance.

Thus Lent is brought to an end, and on Easter Sunday every-day life recommences with dancing and jollity. It must, however, be remarked, that in Mexico they do not fast so strictly as in Europe. They abstain from meat at the utmost on Fridays, and moreover by a special papal dispensation, as the interior of the country is very poor in fish. Even during Passion Week meat may be eaten several times. The Mexicans, indeed, are by no means scrupulous, and never hesitate about eating a good piece of beef, even though a V (vigilia) should stand in the calendar.

The celebration of Passion-Week, as here described, is not to be seen everywhere; in many places it has been wholly dicontinued, and is exclusively confined to the ecclesiastics, as prescribed by the Roman ritual. In the state of Vera Cruz it would be considered a disgraceful profanation. In the mining-districts, old customs have been longer retained; though even there voices are raised against it, the expenses being too great. Associations are sometimes formed, which contribute funds throughout the year, or undertake to provide the various requisites; some, for instance,

procure the tapers, others engage penitents, pay for the sermons, or for the music. The clergy in Mexico do nothing *ex officio*; on the occasion of a festival, the president of an association *(majordomo de la Cofradria)* bargains with the priest for a mass, which is paid for according to the luxury displayed, for sermons, for the procession etc. The good old times are at an end even there, and the Indian now often enquires the reason, when he has to put his hand into his pocket!

* * *

Corpus Christi, which in Mexico, as everywhere in Catholic countries, is celebrated with uncommon splendour, always comes at the warmest season. In the larger cities there is nothing peculiar in the mode of celebration. In the capital only a small proportion of the inhabitants join the procession; but every one desires to see it pass; the fashionable world wishes to exhibit itself in full toilette, and to criticize the toilette of others. The solemnities begin with high-mass, performed in the cathedral by the archbishop, at which all the clergy of the city, including the monks, are present. From the cathedral the procession goes through the nearest western circuit of streets, about a thousand paces. The whole way is covered with a canopy or awning of white linen, with a red border, high enough to leave the balconies of the houses free, which contain the most superb toilettes that the city can produce. The spiritual and the temporal power display all their splendour, the symbol of the divinity is radiant with diamonds. The Light of the World has an escort of honour, consisting of grenadiers with Turkish music; the President appears with his ministers and all his council, the supreme authorities, the administration, the universities, the schools, the municipality, generals in their different uniforms, with a brilliant staff and the corps of officers. The clergy, with the bishop and his imposing train of prebendaries at their head, exhibit the well-disciplined sons of the church in their different garb, who with waving flags, and glancing crosses and standards, afford a prospect equally brilliant and varied.

The number who take part in the procession is so arranged, that, when the last pair leave the cathedral, the first pair re-enter by the great gates. The city exhibits a festive appearance, the houses being decked with carpets and garlands, flags and streamers being hoisted on the palaces and towers, whilst the bells peal and the cannon roar — just as in Europe. The European spectator would be more attracted by the crowd; for nowhere can such diversity of complexion, race, costume and manners possibly be met with.

Let us glance at the same festival in one of the large Indian villages on the plateaux, or in the mountains!

On the four sides of the square in front of the church, the Indians construct a green avenue of trees and branches, an arbour, closely interwoven at the top and at the sides, and lavishly decorated with flower-wreaths. In the four corners of the

square, flower-altars are constructed, where the responses are sung, the ground is profusely covered with flowers, and earthenware basins are seen on all sides, in which copal and storax burn. That which is most singular, and a relic of ancient times, which the Christian priests have permitted to be continued, as a harmless amusement, is the sacrifice of sylvan beasts, which the Indian offers to the divinity, as his ancestors offered to Quezalcoatl or Tlalloc. Every living wild beast that can be procured, is bound and suspended in the green alley. The jackal and the fox, the armadillo and the opossum, the raccoon and the nasua are seen struggling in their bonds; birds of prey, ravens, wild ducks and turkeys, quails and turtle-doves flutter in the snares by which they were caught, and a quantity of small singing-birds flutter and twitter in cages of bamboo from all sides of the green foliage. Even in the church, before the festively decorated high-altar, the melodious song of the mocking-bird is heard, and the metallic notes of the brown silvia.

This innocent gratification may well be conceded to the child of nature! The Indian generally, and more especially the inhabitant of ancient Anahuac, exhibits in his life many traces of the primeval nature-worship of the Toltecs, to whom subsequent generations owed their civilisation and religion. Mountains and springs he still conceives tenanted by tutelary genii, the goddess of the clouds still draws her nets over the sky to fertilize the earth (Matlacuey, Matlaquiahuatl) and the tutelar genius (Tonal) appears to the new-born child on his entrance into life, just as the Tecototl announces the end of his days. His love for flowers, too, his selection of them to adorn churches and altars, his skill in decorating religious performances was not taught by the Spaniards, nor is it accidental, but since many centuries interwoven with his life, and derived from another race than that of the Aztecs with their bloody rites. The offering of living animals on Corpus Christi may also belong to an earlier form of worship.

* * *

Another festival which is kept by the whole population, but which is of peculiar significance for the Indian, is that of All Saints and All Souls. With the Germanic tribes it is the Christmas festival which has received its popular impress from ante-christian habits and traditions. The Romanic tribes are strangers to the Christmas tree and the children's games of the Germans, to the Christmas log of the Britons, and other souvenirs of the yule night. They have received instead, the carneval and other relics of Roman paganism. With the Mexicans the festival of *Todos santos* received a national colouring, dating from the aborigines, but gradually adopted by the Mestizoes and even by the Creoles. It is not the festival of the Roman Church, for this is here only a secondary consideration, it is an ancient Indian festival, which the prudence of the Christian priests, who found it too deeply rooted amongst the neophytes, added to the Christian holidays.

All Saints' Day is everywhere preceded by vast purchases. On this day a new dress must be had, new ribands and shoes; the women buy new crockery of all kinds, fine, parti-coloured mats, elegant little baskets of palm-leaves (*tompiatl*), and bright-coloured schikales (the fruit of the *crescentia alata*). But above all the purchase of wax tapers causes much head-breaking in every house. For several weeks beforehand great activity is observed amongst the retail dealers. Every shopkeeper endeavours to procure wax at a reasonable figure, candle-makers work in his house preparing tapers of all sizes, and in the evening the whole family is occupied in ornamenting these tapers with strips of coloured paper. There is no house, no cottage without some dollars' worth of tapers; the poorest labourer would rather go without bread, than without wax; and the Indians devote the earnings of weeks to its purchase.

In the larger cities this is less known; the higher classes as they are called, withhold themselves as much as possible from plebeian habits, and we must wander to the villages, if we desire to see this festival in its ancient form.

Whoever is fortunate enough to have a godfather among the Indians — and one can easily attain this good fortune — should visit his *compadres* (god-parents) on the first of November. The street in front of the house is swept very clean, and before the door is a large cross covered with immortelles *(tagetes)*. The Indian calls them *sempasochil* and always plants them near his cottage. The house is in festive order, the old saints on the wall are laden with flowers, a wreath of flowers is between them, and two tapers burn in clay candlesticks. No one is at home, but close by, in the kitchen, we distinctly hear the thumping and shaping of the tortillas. Let us look through the doorway into this sanctum of the women. Three stout lasses are preparing the maize on stones, but our *comadre* (godmother) stands there with a knife in her hand, like Judith over Holofernes; happily, though, her victim is only a large turkey. Another, doomed to the same fate, is tied up in a corner; and close by are at least six fat hens, all ready for the pot. "Who would be so cruel, *comadre*", we exclaim, after saluting her: "what are you going to do with this mass of provision? Is one of the girls to be married?" The three look roguishly at each other and laugh. *"Ojala"*, says the old woman chuckling, "I should then be rid of one of my cares; but the fowls are for the dead, and you will afterwards do us the honour of trying the *tlatonile*."

Should the reader think of accepting the invitation, we must warn him not to fill his mouth with the proffered dish before trying it; this *tlatonile* looks like a very innocent ragout, but burns like fire, being the genuine extract of unripe Spanish pepper, and none but mouths that are fire proof may venture on it. But we must now explain the meaning of the festival.

The ancient Aztecs held annually a great festival in honour of the dead, and offered the departed death-sacrifices. In walled sepulchres of the olden time I have found the thigh-bones of turkeys, covered with a dish, and on the pavement surrounding the tombs the bones of little birds, with small pilasters built over them. The

sacrifices were probably of various kinds, accordingly as they presumed their dead to be in the lustrous house of the sun, in the shady abode of Tlalloc, or in the gloomy Mictlan. Even human sacrifices seem to have taken place, sacrifices of slaves, as in front of a large funereal pyramid, in a round walled hollow, numerous skulls were found. It is beyond doubt that at these festivals, death-sacrifices, and death-meals took place. The Christian priests suffered these rites to be combined with those of All Souls, and thus the heathen, probably Toltec custom has maintained itself till the present day. The name would lead one to suppose it a gloomy festival, quietly reminding of all the loved ones, whom the earth covers. Neither the Indian nor the Mestizo knows the bitterness of sorrow; he does not fear death; the departure from life is not dreadful in his eyes, he does not crave for the goods he is leaving, and has no care for those who survive him, who have still the fertile earth, and the mild sky. Is it indifference, is it frivolity which a rich tropical nature bestows on her children? I know not; but it is certain, that in the eyes of the people, death does not appear as a black, dismal spectre, that sorrow for the dead does not absorb all the joys of life. The first outbreak of grief is violent, copious showers of tears are shed, but are soon dried. Like the Mussulman, the Mexican says: "God has willed it, we must all die." Every Indians thinks thus, and regards it from the practical side. On the occasion of a death the relations and neighbours come and share in the grief, especially throughout the night; when the body remains in the house. The tribute offered is a taper, and something to drink. Prayers are offered up for the repose of the deceased, and the night is then passed in social games and merriment in the same apartment where the corpse lies on the flor surrounded with tapers. When death befals a child under seven years (*parvulos*), it is celebrated as a day of rejoicing, because the soul ascends direct to heaven, without undergoing the transitory state of Purgatory. The little corpse is gaily decked with flowers and ribands, fastened to a board and placed upright in a corner of the cottage, in a sort of niche formed of branches and blossoms, and lighted up with many tapers. On the approach of evening, a few rockets proclaim the *velorio*, music resounds, and the whole night is passed in dancing and merry-making. The god-parents of the children do not altogether approve of it, as they have to pay the reckoning. At these wakes the company remain assembled till the morning (with children as with adults), and then proceed immediately to the churchyard. The bier is quickly formed of a few sticks, a mat serves for a coffin; if a priest is at hand, preceded by three cross-bearers he hastens to the spot, gives the benediction, and the body is lowered into the earth, to return to earth. Every one present casts in a handful of dust, the grave is filled in, and the mourners depart without any extraordinary impression being produced. If a mother is pitied for having lost her child, she replies: "I loved the little angel; but I am glad that he is happy, without having had to experience the bitterness of life."

Thus accustomed to make light of that which is invevitable, to dance about the yawning grave, we shall not be surprised to find, that the rites in honour of the

departed have rather a joyous than a melancholy character. We repeat that only the Indian and the Mestizo observe this ancient practice, whereas the white Creole rarely imitates the Indian custom.

In the Indian villages the proceedings are as follows. On the evening of the last day of October, the house is put in the best order, and when it is dark, a new, parti-coloured, woven mat is spread out on the floor of the dwelling. The whole family are assembled in the kitchen, waiting for the meal being prepared, which consists of chocolate, sweet maize porridge, stewed chickens and little tortillas. A portion of each is put if possible into new vessels, and conveyed by the members of the family into the house, where it is placed on the mat; to this is added a peculiar kind of maize-bread, called *elotlascale*, and death-bread, a kind of wheaten-bread without fat, sugar and salt, which is baked for this day only, shaped like a rabbit, a bird etc., and prettily ornamented. On clay candlesticks, corresponding with the number of dishes, thin wax-tapers are lighted, not much thicker than a quill; roses, marigolds, and the blossoms of the *datura grandiflora* are laid between the plates; and now the head of the family invites the dead children, that is to say those of his own immediate house (his own children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters) to come and regale themselves with the offering. The whole family now return to the kitchen to consume the remainder of the meal, which has been prepared abundantly enough to regale also the living. This is the offering of the children, and every child, according to the age it had attained, has its dish and its taper. Saucers with incense are placed around the mat, and fill the chamber with a dense cloud.

The following day offerings are prepared for the adults in a similar manner; but all on a larger scale, from the mat to the tapers. Other dishes, too, are added, which would be too hot for the children: turkey in red-pepper broth, tamales, and other highly seasoned dishes; there is moreover a good supply of drink in large mugs, brandy, pulque, castile, and other favorite liquors of the Indians. With the adults less care is exhibited for adorning the room with flowers; but things are added which belonged to the deceased: their sandals, their straw-hat, or the hatchet with which they worked. The whole house is filled with incense, which is placed before the pictures of the patron saints, who were undoubtedly introduced, three centuries ago, in place of the house idols.

The belief, that the souls of the departed visit the places that were dear to them in life, that they sometimes flutter about their dwelling as bright humming-birds, sometimes float above their former home as clouds, was doubtless handed down by the Toltecs to the subsequent lords of the soil, namely to the Aztecs; and we may assume that it still obtains among the people, although we have never succeeded in gaining confirmation of the same from the mouth of an Indian. They are reserved in everything bearing reference to the religion of their fathers; perhaps, owing to their long subjection, their traditions are unconnected, and only here and there to be recognized.

The meal, dedicated to the manes of the departed, is not usually consumed by those who offer it; but is sent to relations and neighbours, from whom a similar

donation is received. In the villages where there is a mixed population, the young fellows on the look out for fun, go to the dwellings of the Indians, and offer to tell their beads for the repose of the souls. They are welcomed, and the offerings intended for the ghosts, are in part devoured by the living. Let us join a party of them, consisting of young Creoles and a few Mestizoes. They laugh and jest at the silly Indians, who prepare a meal for those who are long since dead. "Do you recollect, Felipe, how we told our beads in old Mizcoatl's house, and had nearly burst with laughter when long Nicholas filched a glass of sweet liquor from the *ofrenta* (death-meal) and emptied it, and then made the old heathen believe, the shade of his son had drunk it?" — "To be sure", returned the other; "but last year he managed better, and would not admit us until all the liquids had been placed in safety. We made up for it, however, by carrying off a contribution from his fat *huajolote* (turkey), which was not to be despised; and there was drink enough at his neighbour's."

Talking in this way, the mischievous rogues knocked at the doors, and muttered prayers, feasted at the expence of the harmless superstition of the poor Indians, and in addition, carried away a tolerable supply of boiled and roast. We quit them, to do honour to the comadre's invitation, and are hospitably entertained. We there learned that only white ragouts were cooked for the children, which are but moderately spiced, but still burn like a decoction of pepper; further that few families spend less than from six to ten dollars for this feast, and that it is their greatest delight to consume all their favorite dishes on this day. The following day, the church-festival of All Souls, mass is attended, and the women light whole rows of little wax tapers which they stick on the floor before them. This is a harvest-day for the priests; for every Indian has a short prayer said for the souls of his departed after divine service, for which he has to depose two reals (about one shilling) on the altar.

In the evening the women and children proceed to the cemetery, strew the graves with flowers, sprinkle them with holy-water, burn incense, and light innumerable tapers, which are suffered to burn until they go out of themselves. In the clear, beautiful November nights, these grave illuminations afford a magical appearance, when the tapers light up the dark cypresses or orange-trees of the cemetery, and the gloomy walls of the chapel. All is hushed; no sound is heard near the abodes of the dead save the chirp of grasshoppers, like the breath of nature; whilst the expiring flame of the tapers reminds us of the soul quitting its frail earthly tenement.

XX.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURISTS.

(HACENDADOS AND RANCHEROS).

The flower of the Mexican population, and that which is healthy and original must be sought for among the agriculturists. It would be incorrect to say among the peasantry, for these do not exist in the European sense; the class of agriculturists and graziers in Mexico, who represent them, are far more independent. They live, it is true, by the sweat of their brow; but at the same time entertain the utmost contempt for a town life, for bureaucrats and clerks, or scribblers, as they term them. The agriculturist deems his occupation the noblest; he is proud of it, and rejoices if his sons choose no other profession. He has no opinion of mining, which, nevertheless, plays a prominent part in the country, because the result is too precarious. Hence the proverb. "De labrador a minéro, gran majadero; de minéro á labrador, gran Sennor", *i. e.*: from farmer to miner, a poor devil, from miner to farmer, a noble gentleman.

The agriculturist is conservative, that is to say, he seeks to keep and to increase his patrimony; he is attached to old habits, to patriarchal customs, to discipline and order in the house; he is religious, honest in his dealings, hospitable and liberal, but at the same time frugal and simple in his living. He has had little opportunity of learning, he is therefore ignorant and superstitious; he has not the refined manners of the city, and puts little restraint on his passions. Love and jealousy bring him into frequent scrapes, and even gambling sometimes attracts him, but only on festive occasions, when dancing and intoxicating liquors have excited him,

After wife and child, the farmer esteems nothing so much as his horse. He has bred it, and broken it in, it belongs to the family, he knows its every movement, he has done wonders and gained victories with it. The horse affords an inexhaustible subject of conversation, as often as two horsemen meet; each praises his own, and the virtues of its sire, its dam, and its ancestors, so that one can confidently affirm, that the spirit of the Arabs accompanied the Andalusians to Mexico. The agriculturists and cattle-breeders belong by descent to the class of Creoles and Mestizoes.

The soil of the republic is for the most part in the hands of private individuals or corporations; comparatively little is state property, and this chiefly in the northern districts. Mexico is a conquered country, the original conquerors selected large estates, and were confirmed in the possession of the same by the Spanish govern-

ment. The original Indian possessors were included in these grants, as serfs; but they were suffered to retain the soil they cultivated, on paying rent. Subsequently a law was promulgated for the protection of the Indians, that the country round each village, to the distance of 600 yards, measured from the church, should belong to the community. Many villages and towns had fought as allies of the Spaniards against the Aztecs, not only retained their lands, but were even rewarded with the confiscated lands of their neighbours. Churches and convents were endowed with landed estates, and wherever a spot was discovered without an owner, some Spanish official, soldier, or priest soon managed to obtain it as a fief. The soil being thus partitioned out, it was natural for large estates to become the property of individuals, especially in the northern, less populous provinces, where the conquest gradually proceeded, and the leaders had leisure to acquire the conquered lands for themselves and their followers.

The natural consequence of this partition of the land was, that the great proprietors, who had often hundreds of square miles, sold estates to the numerous immigrants, or if the property were entailed, they gave inheritable leases. Thus, for example, Ferdinand Cortes or his heirs had given the excellent district of Cuernavaca, in which there are at present many large and flourishing sugar-plantations, as pasture lands on inheritable lease, which even now pay merely the trifling rent of the sixteenth century. With the marquisate of Oajaca, also belonging to the family of Cortes (now Duke of Monteleone in Naples), in extent surpassing a German kingdom, it is the same thing. Even these smaller estates were often so immense, that only the smallest portion of them could be cultivated; it was therefore natural, that with the increasing population, the more distant portions were given to farmers, who paid their rent chiefly in produce. The estates belonging to the church, were also in part farmed, in order to increase the receipts as much as possible.

The large estates in Mexico are termed *haciendas*, which when intended for agriculture are called *hacienda de labor*, when for cattle-breeding: *hacienda de ganado* The hacienda ought by right to measure 21,690 English acres; but the term is applied to every estate on a large scale with solid buildings. The large estates which exclusively carry on cattle-breeding, and often have a superficial area of upwards of fifty square Spanish miles, are usually parcelled out into several small establishments or estancias, which are under one management. All the smaller farms, whether for agriculture or cattle-breeding, are called *ranchos* (in Spain *cortijos*) and their holders *rancheros*. This name comprehends the small landowners, and the farmers.

The owner of a hacienda does not always live on his estate; he is generally considered a rich man, who passes a great part of the year in town, or in one of the larger villages. On the table-land we often meet with wonderful old carriages, drawn by six or eight mules, bristling on all sides with chests, bedding, chairs, and similar household furniture, accompanied by a troop of horsemen. The interior of the lumbering machine is sure to conceal the owner of a hacienda, who, with his family, is going into, or returning from the country. If girls are in the

carriage, or accompany it on horseback, and exhibit delighted faces, you may bet three to one, they are returning to town, and that they are charmed to get rid of their rural enjoyments. In the months of March, April and May, the estates are usually visited; often too in autumn when the rainy season is over (November); for during the rainy months the roads are too bad, and the frequent storms render excursions and journeys difficult.

Most of the old farm-houses look as if they had been built soon after the Conquest. They have the appearance of castles, with high walls, turrets and battlements, capable of defence. All the windows are furnished with strong iron gratings, and the gate is secured at night with heavy bars. This is customary on the plateaux only, and is unknown elsewhere. The master lives with his family and a few confidential servants in the centre of the building; outside the wall, the huts of the labourers form a little village. A garden is rarely attached to the dwelling-house; but there is always a chapel, where mass is read every Sunday, and a shop, where the labourers can supply their wants. There is no wine-house; but strong liquors are sold at the shop, and not in small quantities.

If the master occupies himself with his own affairs it is usually limited to ordering the work and the control; his bookkeeper attends to the accounts and correspondence, his major domo sees that the work is properly carried out. The latter is the master's right hand, and much is entrusted to him. He appears in the evening, and gives an account of the day's labour, tells the clerk what requires to be written down, offers his opinion on the most important affairs, and receives his orders for the following day. He is at hand by daybreak, summons the labourers with the bell, and having read over their names, sings a morning hymn with them. They are then divided into groups, according to their different occupations, and, conducted by a sub-overseer *(capitan)*, proceed to their work. He himself goes round on horseback, examines what is going forward, blames or encourages, and directs the principal labours. The major-domo is an important personage for the master, and therefore an old and tried servant, serious, active, strict and conscientious in his service. He is feared and respected by the labourers, as they are constantly under his eye.

We have already shewn that in consequence of the progressive elevation above the sea, a series of climates ensues, owing to which the Mexican is enabled to cultivate almost every plant on the face of the earth. In the coast-regions, therefore, to the height of 4000 feet, we find the tropical productions, such as cocoa, vanilla, indigo, sugar, coffee, rice, the banana, tobacco, etc. In these regions the cerealiæ of the old world will not flourish; they vegetate with extraordinary power, but produce no grain. Nature has replaced them by maize; for the organisation of this plant is so adapted for allclimates, that it ripens in plains level with the sea, and on mountains attaining an elevation of 5000 feet. In the torrid coast-regions, it requires four months to ripen, and yields from two to three hundredfold, whilst at the opposite limit it takes ten months to arrive at maturity, and produces from forty to fiftyfold

only. The cultivation of the potato, on the contrary, is confined to elevated regions, below five thousand feet it is no longer productive; but the warmer districts more than replace it by the manioc, the batate (convolvulus batata), yams and arum.

XXI.

AGRICULTURE ON THE PLATEAUX.

The immense plateaux extending from the 16th to the 30th degree of north latitude, which are from 5000 to 8000 feet above the sea, produce nowhere tropical plants. The plants of the old world are here met with, and maize, maguey and the cactus for breeding the cochineal. The climate of the plateaux is temperate, without the extremes of heat or cold. In winter the thermometer falls sometimes for a few nights to the freezing point; the mountains and even the plain are occasionally covered with snow; but before noon, snow and ice have disappeared. Agriculture is never hindered by the cold, often by drought. From the beginning of November till June, hardly a drop of rain falls; but from June till October the soil is well saturated, and abundant harvests result.

The husbandmen either resort to artificial irrigation, or sow during the rainy season. In the beautiful valleys of Chiapas and Oajaca, Perote, Puebla, Atlisco, Tlascala, Mexico and Toluca, in the rich lowlands of Rio Grande de Santiago, and in many plains of the northern states, the rivers and brooks, sometimes even the lakes are employed for artificial irrigation; and where this does not suffice, by means of immense dikes, elevated valleys have been converted into lakes, which fill during the rainy season, and supply the fields afterwards with additional moisture. Many haciendas are furnished with expensive aqueducts, which frequently convey the water for miles. All these estates grow wheat and maize, but on a larger scale than most European estates. The soil is ploughed for wheat in October, the grain is sown in November, and the water admitted to the furrows. The seed soon shoots up, is watered twice more during the winter, twice in spring, and ripens in May, or early in June. The threshing is performed by means of horses or mules, in the immediate vicinity of the fields.

Many of the estates have their own mills, and send the flour to the towns, where the consumption of fine bread is greater in proportion, than in Europe, whilst the coloured population of the villages consume chiefly maize-bread (*tortilla*).

Rye is cultivated here and there, oats nowhere; but barley to a considerable extent. Various sorts of maize are grown, which are doubtless varieties of one species, but must be selected according to the climate and the soil. On the plateaux the sowing takes place in a ploughed soil, which is often slightly irrigated. The harvest is in December. The top of the husk is removed as soon as the grain is firm, and when dry is used as forage for the horses; the leaves and stalks are crushed and employed for a similar purpose, the husks and roots serve as fuel, and the finer leaves of the fruit as covers for the cigaritos.

The regions that have a warmer climate than the plateaux, grow much maize, but not till the beginning of the rainy season, and nevertheless the vegetation is complete in from four to six months. The yield is infinitely greater, and there are some volcanic soils, where the yield is 400 or even 500 fold (*viz.* the plain of Yguala).

If, as is occasionally the case, the early crop of maize suffers from the cold, barley is planted in the rainy season to make up for it, by which means the forage keeps down in price; for barley, with the exception of the small quantity lately required for brewing, is used exclusively for feeding.

Of the summer-plants most grown on the large estates, none is so universal as beans, which are in great request throughout the country. To these may be added horse-beans, pease, lentils, pistachios, chile (capsicum annuum, or Spanish pepper), the batata, and occasionally rape and the potato.

Olive-plantations and vineyards were forbidden during the rule of the Spanniards, and although soil and climate are well adapted for both, little has been done in this way. There are, indeed, a few larger olive plantations, which, however, do not produce the hundredth part of what is consumed, aud little progress is made, the Mexican being no friend to plantations which become productive after some years only. It is the same thing with the culture of the wine; large sums are sent out of the country for Spanish and French wines, whilst the Mexican might supply the whole northern continent with wines of superior quality. The wine grown in Paso del Norte, Parras, Cedros etc. on the northern plateaux are equal to those of southern Europe, and even keep better than the Italian wines. These plantations require land capable of being irrigated. The cultivation of the maguey (*agave americana* or the great aloe), on the contrary, requires little attention, and the soil can do without artificial irrigation. The maguey-plantations have been called the Indian vineyards. On arid plains and mountains of the Mexican table-land, consisting chiefly of tufa, conglomerate and decayed volcanic matter, the maguey is planted in rows, more especially in the districts where there is a denser Indian population. The Indian surrounds his farm with the magucy, and plants several rows of it behind his house, but only enough for his own use. The plantation gives little trouble, for the soil is neither ploughed nor hoed; it has not to be protected against the damage

that might be committed by intruding animals, as both domestic and wild animals avoid coming into contact with it.

The plant requires from ten till fifteen years to arrive at maturity, according to the locality. When the lobes begin to close, this is a sign, that the moment has arrived when the sap may be withdrawn. The manner in which the Indians do this has already been described. In the towns and villages great quantities of it are consumed; pulque is the favorite beverage of the Indian and of the Mestizo population; and even the Creole of the plateaux is unwilling to dispense with it, as he considers it wholesome, nourishing and refreshing.

The maguey plant yields daily from four to eight bottles of sap, several months in succession. On an average, 600 bottles of sap may be reckoned for each plant, valued at four or five dollars. Many years, it is true, are requisite to bring the plantation to maturity. But as the planting is not expensive, as little time is required to attend to it, and the soil itself could only be used for pasture, the capital invested returns good interest, especially as and this — is the case with large estates — a further supply of several thousand is planted annually. This is absolutely necessary, as each plant produces once only, and then dies.

Brandy can be distilled from the juice of the agave, as from every other saccharine fluid; but it is never done. A kind of brandy, termed *vino mescal*, is distilled from the flesh of a small-leaved agave, growing wild on the mountains. The Indians prepare it by means of a still of the rudest description, and although much of the alcohol is lost in the process, they would not change the apparatus on any account.

The leaves of the agave contain strong fibres, of which ropes are made, more durable than those of hemp. But not the thousandth part of this excellent material is made use of, nor does any one think of making an export article of it. The wild agave produces the best fibres.

The plateaux are singularly rich in numerous species of cactus, which nature produces in the strangest forms. The opuntiæ alone are cultivated, partly for their fruit, partly for breeding the cochineal. The latter is limited to the southern states Oakaca and Chiapas, and chiefly occupies the small farmer, the Indian of the mountainous districts. There are, indeed, some large plantations managed by Creoles. Few plants are so easily propagated as the round-leaved cactus; without turning up the soil, the leaves are planted in rows five feet apart, they soon take root and send out fresh shoots. The cactus species required for breeding cochineal, is an artificial variety, originally the *cactus coccinellifer*. The *wild* cactus of this name has thick round leaves, yellowish fruit and blossoms; the *tame* cactus, on the contrary has long, fine leaves, red fruit and many thorns. Not only the plant, but also the cochineal is changed by cultivation. The wild cochineal is everywhere met with on the plateaux, but the insect is smaller and covered with almost invisible little feathers, so that a group of them has the appearance of down on the leaves. The tame cochineal is powdered white, as if it had lain in flour; the male has wings, and is

very small; the female is larger and stouter. There is usually one male to two hundred females.

Cochineal breeding requires much care and incessant attention. In April and May, the leaves with the young brood are cut off; they are kept twenty days in the house, and then under a shed till August. The insects are now full grown, the females teeming, and these in little baskets filled with soft moss, are hung up on the cactus plants in the open air. Their instinct directs them to the leaves, where each female lays about two hundred eggs, then creeps back into the basket and dies. The dead females are the first and inferior harvest.

The eggs are soon hatched, in four or five months the insects are full grown, are carefully removed from the leaves, killed in hot water, or in an oven, and dried in the sun, by which they lose two thirdsin weight. This is the chief harvest, which, in warm and favorable situations is often succeeded by a smaller harvest. During the growth of the cochineal on the cactus great attention is requisite. Wind and rain, cold and heat destroy the young brood; the cultivator must sometimes construct roofs of matting or foliage over the plants, sometimes re-admit the sun; he must remove all the weeds, so that no enemy may find concealment, he must move about the plantation all day, to keep off or destroy mice and birds, lizards and spiders, wasps and bugs. The blossoms and fruit must be removed from the cactus, and the leaves cleaned with a soft little brush (a squirrel's tail), in order that the tender colonists may receive wholesome food. The work, to be sure, is not fatiguing, and can be performed by the feebler members of the family, by women and children: still it is attended with constant anxiety, as a single hail-storm, a waterspout, a storm, or a night-frost may annihilate the hopes of a whole year.

Mexico produces from a million to a million and a half pounds of cochineal, valued at from one and three quarters to two million dollars; it is packed in raw hides, and the export to the United States and Europe constitutes a valuable remittance for the merchant, who thus saves the 6½ per cent which he would have to pay for exporting coin.

In Mexico the soil is rarely manured, the mineral components being such, that their decomposition by air and water causes extraordinary fertility, and is constantly renewed. Many districts have been sown every year for centuries with maize, a plant that exhausts the soil more than any other, and shill one constantly sees rich crops. If we regard the plains of Tlascala, Cholula, Toluca, Cuautla and others, we find the soil covered with decomposed volcanic matter, or consisting of ashes and lava, which by gradual decomposition maintain its fertility. Some districts are so very stony, that it seems impossible to plant anything in them, and still they are remarkably fertile. In some places the artificial irrigation conveys many decomposed salts to the soil, and even the heavy tropical rains not only precipitate much nitrogen, but convey fertilizing particles of the rock far into the cultivated plains. In the dry mineral violent whirlwinds perform the same service, as they constantly convey season particles into the plain.

In many districts less favored by nature, the soil is lightly manured by flocks of sheep and goats. The manure from the stables of horses and mules is heaped up in the yard as rubbish, and in autumn burnt. Only horses and mules are kept in stables, usually, indeed, none but the more valuable saddle-horses, when they are wanted for work; at other times they are in the pasture. The horned cattle never have the honour of living under a roof; they invariably live in the open air, and, after a hard day's work are at most permitted to rest in an uncovered enclosure. The forage of horses and mules in the stable is almost always dry, chopped straw mixed with maize or barley; in the dry season, the oxen get maize-straw, in the season green fodder, besides the grass of the pasture, which is insufficient during rainy the working season.

With rare exceptions, oxen are used for ploughing. Large estates often require two hundred yoke of oxen and even more, so as to be able to change once a day. The plough is still the ancient Roman one, customary in Spain, which merely furrows the soil instead of turning it up. The harrow is not much used; a thorn-bush replaces it.

Hand-labour in the fields is attended to by men only, and the remark holds good for the whole country, for large and small estates. During the maize harvest, however, the Indian women are actively employed, it being considered more as a holiday. All wish to take part in the *viuda*, and consequently do not absent themselves from the work. The *viuda* is the last ear that comes from the field. A tall stalk with the finest fruit is selected; it is ornamented with ribands and flowers, and conveyed in triumphant procession to the master's house, as an indication of the harvest being completed. A dance, or at least some bottles of brandy reward the attention of the servants.

On all the haciendas the work is performed by day-labourers, who live on the estate and serve voluntarily. They are not boarded; but receive their pay in money, and usually every week a ration of maize and pulse. They can procure the necessaries of life at the shop belonging to the hacienda on trust, which is then deducted from their wages. Should they be hindered from working by sickness, or if the master makes special advances for weddings, christenings or burials, they are forced to incur debt, and are naturally obliged to work it off.

The usual wages on the plateaux are two reals, or about a shilling, whilst wages towards the coast wages the increase to three and four reals. During harvest-time labourers are procured from the Indian villages, who come for a week or a fortnight, with their provisions and tools, and are usually conducted by a *capitan*, appointed by the village alcalde. These people (cuadrilla) are willing, moderate and enduring; but they are only to be obtained when they have finished havesting in their own little plantations.

The land belonging to most of the haciendas is too extensive for the proprietor to cultivate even the fourth part of it; he devotes therefore the remainder of it to cattle-breeding, or lets it out to farmers.

XXII.

AGRICULTURE IN THE TORRID REGIONS.

Agriculture on the table-lands has its prescribed limits, according to the soil and climate. The European may easily fancy himself in his own country; the corn-fields, the meadows and market-gardens, even the orchards are those of the temperate zones. On crossing the mountain-ridges which encircle the plateaux, be it to the east or west, the whole physiognomy of the country assumes a decided tropical appearance; the heights are wooded; instead of the fine short Alpine grass, the plains are covered with taller grasses, the ground is overshadowed with creeping-plants and brushwood, and agriculture obtains produce of a very different kind. The estates of the east coast differ from those of the west coast. In the latter all the perennial plants require artificial irrigation, whilst the coast-lands of the Gulf, near the mountains, have rain throughout the whole year. Maize, frijoles (little black beans), tobacco, rice, cotton, and indigo are cultivated as summer-plants, that is to say at the commencement of the rainy season, and require no further, or very little extra irrigation; the sugar-cane, coffee, cocoa, vanilla, manioc, and the banana must have irrigable land on the west side, on the east side in few places only.

On the table-lands the soil must be ploughed for sowing, in the *tierra caliente* the plough is met with on the larger plantations only. The rancheros plant their summer- produce mostly in forest-land, where no plough can be employed. In the dry season, they hew down all the trees and bushes, chopping them up as small as possible; the wood is allowed to dry for some months, and is then set fire to. When the rain sets in, the grain is sown without the soil being turned up; with an iron-pointed stick, holes are bored in the ground, and the seed-corn cast in. Maize, beans, rice, cotton, etc. are sown in this manner, and the tobacco transplanted. In a few days the young seed shootsup, and with it innumerable weeds, which are easily removed. The cotton thrives only there where the winter-months are without rain, especially on the coasts of the southern and ocean on the west side of the Cordilleras to the height of 3000 feet. On the east side the winter in the neighbourhood of the mountains is too damp, the cotton is spoilt by dew and rain, in consequence of which it is planted in the hot coast-regions only. The districts of Tlacotalpan, Cuzamaloopan and Tustla, in the state of Vera Cruz, further, thec oast of Yucatan, produce the best cotton on the east side. The indolence of the inhabitants of the coast is wonderful; a few dozen bananas, a small field with manioc and maize afford nourishment without much labour: the coast rivers abound in excellent fish and turtle, and there are whole forests of palms tuba (palm-wine) and oil. The idle ranchero does not give himself the trouble to

ascend the palm-tree, in order to procure the ripe fruit; he cuts the tree down. The small cocoa-tree (*coquillo de aceite*) has so oily a fruit, that the kernel is fastened to the end of a stick, where it burns like a lamp. A small hollow is hewn in the trunk, which serves for some months to hold wine, and refills itself daily. This fermented juice, which is saccharine and therefore contains alcohol, tastes very differently to pulque; it has more resemblance to wine, effervesces like Champagne, and is the favorite Tuba of the west-coast.

The cotton is usually planted between the maize, when the latter is already three or four feet high, and freed from weeds. The plant remains small, until the maize harvest, when the shade is removed and the vegetation proceeds more vigorously. By breaking the tops and pressing it downwards, a creeping-plant is made of it, and it is affirmed to be more productive in this form. In the whole country only one sort is planted, called by the Americans, green-seed cotton or gulf cotton: it is long and fine, but is not the best of the sorts now grown.

The cultivation of the coffee-tree is new, and as yet so insignificant, that none is exported. At the foot of the mountain, from 2000 to 3000 feet above the sea, the coffee-tree thrives exceedingly well, producing a small, hard, very aromatic bean. For the small planter it is just the thing; he might grow a few hundred coffee-plants near his house, which would have the appearance of being surrounded by a friendly garden. Picking the ripe berries, cleaning and drying them, is the work of women and children, and is all the easier, as they continue to ripen from November till March, and the harvest can therefore be got in most leisurely. And yet very few cottages are found overshadowed by the dark-green foliage of the coffee-tree; in the neighbourhood of Cordova alone, most of the cottages of the natives are built in coffee-gardens, topped by orange, banana and mango-trees, which when in blossom (from February till April), when the dark branches seem to be covered with fragrant snow, present a magnificent appearance. Trees that are carefully attended to, produce annually an average of from a pound to a pound and a half of dry coffee, and the usual price at harvest-time is six dollars per hundredweight. On an American acre 1000 trees can be planted; one man can attend to 5000 trees (the harvest not included; it is therefore evidently an advantageous investment for the small planter.

It is otherwise with the cultivation of the sugar-cane, which requires buildings, machines, beasts of draught and burden, and consequently demands a greater amount of capital. At an elevation of 4000 feet, the coffee-tree still thrives; but the sugar-cane, except in favored localities, cannot be planted with advantage at a greater absolute height than 3000 feet. On the whole of the western slope of the plateaux, the East-Indian sugar-cane is planted with artificial irrigation. The great haciendas of the plains of Amilpas, in the districts of Cuernavaca, Cuautla and Tetecala supply the plateaux with most sugar and rum; the majority of these plantations (of which there are about 50) produce annually from 10,000 to 15,000 cwt. of white sugar, which is alone used in the country.

On eth east side of the country the cane from the South-Sea islands is every-

there planted, the yellow as well as the striped, which becomes much longer than the East-Indian. It requires eighteen months to ripen, whilst the East-Indian is ripe in fourteen months; but the latter produces one, or at the utmost two harvests, the former three or four.

During the Spanish rule, the sugar production of Mexico was more important than at present; formerly great quantities were exported, and the court of Madrid was supplied from Cordowa, in the state of Vera Cruz. In the marvets of Cadiz and Santander, the Mexican sugar was considered to be of the first quality. The distillation of rum was limited, the state having monopolized the sale. In the war of independence, the finest plantations, being the property of the Spaniards, were set fire to, or were deserted; and whatever is left for a year uncultivated in the teeming *tierra caliente*, becomes a forest. In the neighbourhood of Cordova alone, six and thirty haciendas were thus destroyed. At present scarcely enough is grown for home consumption, and the prices of raw sugar are as high as those of refined sugar in Europe.

Plantations of cocoa are met with in low, moist and hot districts only, where disease and tormenting insects render it impossible for any save the acclimatised natives to exist. Cocoa is planted only in the state of Tabasco, and in the south eastern part of Oajaca, in the district of Soconusco. The Mexican cocoa belongs to the finer sorts, that of Oajaca is even considered the best in the world. The cultivation of this tree is ancient, and was known before the time of the Aztecs; but during the Aztec rule it must have been far more considerable than at present, if we bear in mind the vast quantities of cocoa which the tributary peoples of the coast were obliged annually to forward to the capital. The larger plantations in Tabasco are managed by Creoles, but although there is no want of land, admirably adapted for the purpose, very few new plantations arise. The coast population is scattered and indolent; and the natives of more elevated regions flee from the scorching lowlands as from the plague. Even the most indigent cannot be induced to settle on the coast, though with the prospect of making a fortune.

Vanilla is cultivated also in hot districts only, and moreover exclusively in the state of Vera Cruz. The plant belongs to the family of the orchideæ, species epidendrum. It is a soft, succulent, thick-leaved plant, climbing tall trees, striking its roots into the bark, and receiving its nourishment chiefly from the air. The beautiful, snow-white blossom, with light green labellum has scarcely any smell, even the ripe capsule develops little aroma, which is in great measure produced by an artificial fermenting process. The ripe capsules are carefully wrapped in woollen cloths and placed in a box, which has been slightly warmed by a straw fire. During the heat of the day they are exposed to the sun, and on the approach of evening always wrapped up again. On rainy days, artificial heat must replace the sun, and this drying is done on thin bamboo-trays, which are suspended over coal-fires, and must constantly be swung backwards and forwards. If the pod dries unequally, and portions of it remain green, it must be wrapped up separately in a piece of flannel,

until the dark-brown colour is equally diffused. There is the same difficulty in keeping them; as the capsule may not become hard, lest the etherial oil should be dissipated, and yet it spoils if it becomes mouldy indeed one single rotting pod will spoil a whole parcel, unless it be at once removed.

In a country where labour is at a premium, it is evident that work requiring such minute attention cannot be managed on a large scale. It is herefore the Indian and his family, who occupy themselves with the cultivation and preparation of vanilla. The plant grows wild in the forests of the coast (some species at an elevation of 3000 feet); but the finest sort is raised by the Indians of the Totonac tribe, who inhabit the districts of Papantla, Misantla, and Nautla. In young forests the brushwood is partially cleared, and then a slip of vanilla placed on the ground in some loose earth and tied with bast to the trunks of the trees. The harvest usually begins in the third year. But the Indian also seeks for the wild vanilla in the forest, and trains it, especially in the southern part of the state of Vera Cruz, in the districts of Tuxtla, Acayucan and Tlacotalpan. On the coasts of the southern ocean, there is much of the best species of vanilla in the forests; but there no one is acquainted with it, and it remains untouched.

Indigo is cultivated in the country, but only on some of the slopes towards the southern ocean. The climate is very favorable for it, and some species, which are rich in colouring matter, are brought forth spontaneously. The arrangements for extracting the dye are simple and inexpensive; and yet the cultivation of indigo is strangely neglected. Under the Spanish rule much indigo was planted, as the Spaniards bought it up at prices which afforded the planter a larger profit with small labour. That the old method of extracting the dye, that chemistry now plays a part in the world, that one must produce more, and at is unpratical a cheaper rate than hitherto, the planters have never found out; but as the merchant could no longer take their indigo at the former price, and they had no desire to render themselves acquainted with any other process, they preferred growing it no longer.

In Mexico every one smokes tobacco, men and boys, women and girls; one would therefore suppose that vast quantities were grown. This is not the case: the plant has been wholly withdrawn from private speculation, and the sale monopolized for the benefit of the state, because it always had been so during the time of the Spaniards, and it was deemed adviseable to retain it. The state is the sole vendor of tobacco and snuff, and has a sufficient supply grown in four or five districts of the state of Vera Cruz. In 1832 the monopoly was given up, but owing to endless financial difficulties again introduced by Santanna, and made over to farmers at a stipulated price. In was June and July the bedsare prepared, the tobacco is tansplanted from August till November, and from December till April the harvest is got in. The soil is carefully attended to, the young plant kept clear from weeds, and as soon as the buds begin to shew themselves, the tops are broken off. Not more than from eight to ten leaves are left on the plant without counting the sand-leaf, which is thrown away. Custom-house officers visit, the plantations, and see that no more

than the number agreed upon is planted, others guard the mountain-passes towards the table-land in order to prevent smuggling.

The soil is so productive, and the climate so favorable, that after stripping off the leaves, and cutting down the stalk to within somes inches of the ground, fresh vigorous shoots appear, one or two of which are allowed to remain. They are soon as large as the mother-plant and afford a second, or even a third harvest. The leaves are hung up on bast strings, dried in the shade, and then sent to the chief depôts, where, when they have undergone fermentation, they are sorted, and tied up in bundles. The tobacco is then sent to the government factories in bales, where it is not weighed until two months afterwards. The price is high, and varies from 12 to 28 dollars per cwt.; it is paid for in ten monthly instalments.

Various kinds of tobacco are planted, mostly that with the short dingy yellow blossom, which has a very large strong leaf. But there is little doubt that the sorts would be more carefully selected, if the trade were not fettered by the monopoly. Most of the government planters enter into an arrangement with the small farmers and peasants, who have to grow a certain number of plants, on condition of handing over the harvest at a low figure — 6 to 8 dollars per cwt. These *aviados* receive something in advance, and their chief profit consists in securing the sand-leaf, and the greater part of the after-harvest, which they sell to the contrabandists. It is, indeed, allowed to export whatever remains; but it is attended with so many annoyances from the authorities, that it is never attempted. The many ships, which enter the Mexican harbours of the east coast with European manufactures, find no return-freight except gold and silver, cochineal, vanilla, a few drugs and goat-skins, all of which take up very little room in the ships (money is usually sent off in the English government-steamers); consequently they must either proceed to Laguna to buy log-wood, or they must take in sugar, coffee or tobacco in a Cuban or Haitian port. The expence is therefore double, to say nothing of the loss of time. As soon as tobacco becomes an export article, its cultivation must increase immensely in the coast-states, the Mexican being very partial to this branch ofagriculture, which occupies him part of the year, only.

More liberal commercial principles have rendered the soil of Cuba several hundred per cent more productive, have filled the ports with forests of masts, whilst Mexico which could produce infinitely more than Cuba, sees but few sails in her harbours, and is unable to freight these few with the produce of the country.

Rice, which might also become an export article, is planted everywhere in the warmer coast-regions; but almost exclusively by the ranchero and the Indian, and frequently without the plough, precisely like the maize. Not swamp-rice, but mountain-rice is cultivated, which affords a very plenteous harvest, and rarely fails.

The small planter, ranchero of the warmer districts, beside his maize-field, has usually some small plots of land with beans, Spanish pepper, tomatas, yams and bananas, which furnish him with a quantity of nourishment. The edible arum root, bears from 10 to 15 pounds' weight of bulbs to each plant, the yam (*dioscorea*)

develops monstrous roots weighing from 50 to 80 pounds, the batate or sweet potato, produces its mealy bulb three or four months after being planted, and the manioc (*jatrophamanihot*) gives a quantity of excellent starch. The ranchero takes little trouble with these products, which richly replace the potato; he considers it rather a sort of luxury, and if he cultivates half an acre of them, thinks he has done much. He attaches more importance to the banana (*musa paradisiaca, regia* and *sapientum*) are the three sorts known in Mexico), because it always provides him with fruit. This fine plant is one of the richest gifts of bounteous Nature. In the second year it has a fruit-branch, and for half a century unweariedly produces fresh branches every year, each bearing from 75 to 100 fruits, if one is only careful not to let the brushwood gain the ascendancy, and to remove the branches which have already borne. Each plant forms a group of stems of different sizes, varying from one to twenty feet in height, and in every degree of development, some of them constantly laden with fruit. A few dozen of such plants produce more fruit than a family can consume, and moreover in all seasons. Raw and cooked, roasted in the ashes, or baked in fat, it is relished by every Mexican; if cooked while unripe, it has more farina than saccharine matter, and resembles the potato; when dried it is better than the fig, and is sent to all parts of the country. The fragrant foliage affords a pleasant shade, the dried fibre of the stem a soft cushion, the huge leaf a clean table-cloth, on which the fruit appears as the meal. All the domestic animals, the dog and cat excepted, like the banana; the Indian prepares a fermented liquor from it, and the distiller converts the saccharine matter into alcohol.

We will now conduct the reader to one of the little ranchos, so constantly met with, both in the east and west.

On a hillock in the midst of the savanna (prairie-land) stands a hut with a slanting roof of grass or palm-leaves, overshadowed by a large mimosa, the branches of which, with their feathery foliage, are extended in the form of an umbrella. There is neither bush nor grass about the house, and within a circuit of ten or twelve paces all is cleared. A kind of slight ladder leans against the trunk of the mimosa, in order that the fowls may ascend and roost on its branches. By its side dozes pleasantly in the shade a large black sow, half buried in the ground, surrounded by her promising family, wallowing in the mud. The sides of the hut are constructed of bamboo-staves, through which so much light enters, that no windows are needed; the door is open, and immediately in front of it, the body-guards have bivouacked, consisting of three or four lean dogs, who, on our approach, raise their heads, and commence a most discordant barking. *"Tscho, animales!"* cries a female voice from within, and the señora immediately appearing at the entrance, drives off the dogs, and returns our salutation. She is a Mestizo woman, somewhat brown, barefoot, but cleanly dressed, whilst her long flowing hair shews that she is just performing her toilette. "Will you have the kindness, Señora, to favor us with a draught of water, and then to tell us which direction we must take to find a path that conducts to a village?" — "Willingly", she replies: "Sit down, meanwhile, on the mat, the air is

cool there." She fetches water from the large jar, in a gourd, and presents it with excuses for having no glass. We examine the dwelling: like all these little ranchos it is extremely simple. At the back, the roof slopes almost to the ground; forming thus a sort of alcove, which serves as the sleeping-apartment. The bedsteads are of bamboo, covered with mats. In the middle of the house the fire burns, and near it are the implements for crushing maize. A few earthen pots, plates and cups, some calabashes and wooden tubs constitute the furniture. An old gun with a flint-lock hangs on the wall, with a shooting-pouch of the skin of the tiger-cat, some cutting implements, and several large fruit branches of the banana. A rope passes transversely from one corner of the hut to the other, from which hangs the supply of dried meat, looking like black strips of leather. The skins of various animals evidence the sylvan prowess of the master.

"Have you lived here very long, my good woman?" we enquire, after having refreshed ourselves with the draught, and thanked with a "*Dios se lo pague* (God reward you for it)." — "Oh! yes, many a long year; my eldest boy was then at the breast, and now he's as tall as his father."

We are further informed by the good donna, to whom the land belongs, and how much they pay to farm it, namely two reals (one shilling) a head, and three fanegas of the cuartilla. That is to say, for every animal they pay annually two reals pasture-money, and for a cuartilla of maize-ground (about five acres) three fanegas of the produce. We learn also, that behind the trees to the left, lives a brother of the wife, and a little further off two brothers of the man, that they had a grand dance on Sunday, because a nephew married, besides other news of the kind. Presently the husband comes home with four half-savage sons, all wearing coarse blouses, sandals on their feet, and with heavy burthens on their backs. They bring a supply of maize, fire-wood, a jar of water, a basket with manioc and fruits, and a living armadillo, which the youngest boys have caught, and now slaughter and prepare for the kitchen. After greeting the master of the house, we enquire why he does not have his plantation nearer, or remove his dwelling to the vicinity of the plantation. "Ah! you don't understand that", he returns. "My plantation lies down there in a hollow, surrounded by wood, because the soil there is excellent, and the horned cattle can do me no harm; but one can't live there for the intermittent fever, and because there are too many snakes, mosquitos and garrapatas. Besides one can't keep a fowl or a pig there, on account of the numerous foxes, coyotes and lions (*felis concolor*). One must live up here in the pure air; but here I can't plant, because in the dry season, the cattle would leave me no rest by night or day, and would break through the hedges which would here require much labour to repair. The savanna, too, sometimes catches fire, and might destroy my labour in a few moments. Two years ago, the house here was burnt down, with everything in it, whilst we were at the christening of a neighbour's child. I have now effected a clearing round the house, and can leave without anxiety."

PLATE 18. THE DEATH OF THE STAG.

Engraved by Mr. Scott from a Picture painted by Mr. Ward, in the Collection of the Duke of Bedford, at Woburn Abbey.

These people can seldom read or write, and receive no instruction whatever. When they intend marrying, they must know part of the catechism by heart, and must, therefore, when the time comes, be crammed up to the mark. They are not fond of hard work; nor have they any need of it, as they have plenty to live upon, if they devote only a few hours a day to agricultural labour. They are good hunters, know the haunts of the deer and wild-boars, and track the wild turkey. The men tan the deer-skins remarkably well, dye them, and make their clothes of them; the women spin and weave cotton. During half the year, there is little or nothing to be done in the field; the chase is then attended to, or the fibres of the long-leaved *bromelia pita*, or of the maguey are prepared, or cordage and ropes made of it, and sent to market. In other localities they collect copal, storax, and Peruvian balsam, the fruits of the oil-palm, pimento or vanilla in the forests. Many days, however, are passed extended on the mat, playing the guitar, sleeping, or staring up at the blue sky; the report of a festival in the neighbourhood, however, electrifies them; the prospect of a fandango makes dandies of them, they bathe and anoint themselves, and are then indefatigable in song and dance.

XXIII.

THE CATTLE-BREEDERS AND HERDSMEN.

The lands of the haciendas, as we have already remarked, are partly too large to be devoted to agriculture alone, partly unfit for cultivation, being sometimes stony, arid, or steep mountains. Such tracts are, if possible, devoted to cattle-breeding. In the coast regions and in the northern provinces of the country, the population is insufficient for agricultural purposes; many hundred square miles of the most fertile soil would be completely useless to the proprietors, if they were not employed for pasturage, which can be attended to by a few herdsmen. But in addition to the force of circumstances, the Mexican is fond of cattle-breeding, because it feeds him without hard work, enables him to indulge his taste for a Bedouin life, and to be on horseback as often and as long as he pleases. This is why, in addition to the great cattle-breeders, there are so many rancheros who carry on cattle-breeding on small farms. In the villages that have lands of their own, almost every one has some dozen cows, mares, sheep or goats at pasture; it is a description of luxury, bringing

little pecuniary increase, but is regarded by the people as something to fall back upon in case of need. The animals cost nothing to feed, they increase without requiring any attention, therefore why should they not be kept?

This custom is, however, in many respects injurious to agriculture; the diligent planter is forced carefully to fence in his plantations, which is attended with trouble and expence, without thoroughly securing them, as the animals manage to break through occasionally, in spite of every care. The goats injure the orchards by gnawing off the bark, and even the swine commit much damage by grubbing up the grass Wherever agriculture predominates, the cattle-breeder must be responsible for the damage his beasts commit. In less populous districts this is not possible, the rule there being, that the farmer must protect himself against the cattle, and this being difficult, agriculture makes no progress. This is especially the case in the northern states, and in the warmer regions towards both seas.

In the Tierra caliente sheep and goats do not thrive. The great quantity of prickly plants become entangled to such an extent in the wool, that it is completely spoiled; and during the rainy season the humidity is such, that the foot-rut and other diseases carry them off. With horse and cattle-breeding the result is quite different. The horses of the Tierra caliente are indeed not so hardy as those of the plateaux, hence the proverb: "En tierra caliente, ni caballos ni gente (in the, hot regions, the horses and the people are good for nothing)."

The horned cattle are left entirely to nature; like the deer in a park, they seek their own pasture, keep together in herds or families, and choose favorite spots, to which they invariably return. According to the season, their instinct leads them to pasture, during the rainy season in the savannahs, during the dry months in the shady forests. These animals, however, are not wild, they do not shun man, and every head is marked.

The different pasture-grounds of a hacienda, termed *potreros*, are under the care of herdsmen (vaqueros), each man having usually from 500 to 800 head of cattle to look after. These herdsmen know all their beasts, and are known by them, so that when they appear in the pasture, or cry "toma, toma (take)" they run after them in crowds. The means by which the herdsman attracts his subjects is salt; he always has a bag of salt hanging from his saddle, some of which he occasionally strews on a large stone, or sometimes drops on the tongue of a favorite cow.

All the Mexican cowherds are mounted, partly because it is impossible to survey such extensive tracts on foot, partly because they often require a fleet horse, to catch stragglers. Frequently the animals injure themselves, the bulls fight, a sharp thorn, or a beast of prey (jaguar, puma, or wolf) wounds them, and as in the hot regions the flesh-fly lays its eggs in the wound, the assistance of the herdsman is indispensable. He therefore constantly has his lasso with him, made of leather, or of the fibres of the maguey. At full gallop he pursues the flying animal, casts the noose about its neck, quickly turns his horse's head, and drags the struggling prisoner to the nearest tree, to which it is soon bound. In a moment he has dismounted, has

cast a second noose about the hind-feet, and with one jerk the heaviest beast is extended on the ground; the hind and fore-feet are quickly tied together, and now the surgical operation can be performed at leisure.

These herdsmen are the best horsemen that can be met with; it is often wonderful how they can gallop under low trees, through dense wood, lying on the horse's neck, and yet cast the lasso with the greatest precision. They are as venturesome as indefatigable in their dangerous profession, and if incited by emulation, their feats of horsemanship are equal to those exhibited in the circus.

The vaquero always lives in the middle of his pasture-grounds, near a watering-place, and has a strong enclosure of stone or logs *(corral)*, into which the herd can be driven. The calves are taken thither, when some days old, and tied up under a shed. Instinct leads the cows twice a day to the enclosure, to give their young the required nourishment. Part of the milk is withdrawn, and this is done more for the sake of taming both cow and calf, and to accustom them to man, than for the sake of the milk. After two months the calf is set at liberty, but it is now accustomed to the place, and remains, especially if it be driven once a week with the herd to the enclosure to receive a little salt.

Few haciendas have regular dairies for preparing cheese; butter is only churned in the neighbourhood of the larger towns. The owner of such an estate, mostly leaves the profit arising from the milk, wholly or in part to the herdsmen, in order to induce them to devote their attention to taming the calves. In the whole country, the cows never suffer themselves to be milked without the calf, which must always begin to suck before the cow can be milked.* In spite of the vast number of cows, therefore, it often happens that not a single glass of milk can be had at the great farms; and the European desirous of quenching his thirst with a draught of new milk, cannot comprehend it, when the herdsmen says: "I have no calf tied up."

In the states on both coasts there are estates, which possess from 10,000 to 20,000 head of horned cattle. Some of them cannot procure herdsmen enough, and part of the cattle become half wild; the calves are not tamed, the beasts receive no salt, and cannot be driven into the enclosure. On the approach of man they fly like deer, and stratagem is requisite, to obtain possession of them. For this purpose a number of tame oxen are kept in every hacienda, termed *cabestros*, which are generally used for conveying the wild cattle, a wild animal being attached to a tame one. If wild cattle are to be caught, a number of these tame oxen are driven to the spot where they are likely to be at pasture. Their wild colleagues soon come out of the bush and join company. A troop of horsemen begin to drive them slowly; the tame oxen immediately proceed to the corral or enclosure; the wild ones follow them, and are easily caught. Occasionally an unusually large bull is shot, the flesh salted and the hide disposed of. On the haciendas, however, which are

* In Northern Africa (for instance, in Algiers), the same thing is met with among the Arab and Kabyle cattle-breeders.

well managed, the cattle must suffer themselves to be driven easily into the corral, and often receive salt. Once a year all the cattle in the vaqueria are driven in; the young beasts which are not yet branded, are now marked, and the number of the stock carefully noted. This is an important festival with the herdsmen, and is called Herradero. The country-people joyfully anticipate it for months in advance.

As but few of the herdsmen can write, they keep an account of the calves born, with a kind of tally. This is a broad, untanned strap, on one side of which the male calves, on the other the female calves are registered by notching. Another strap registers those which have died, or been sold, and these tallies are handed over in autumn when stock is taken.

The great profit in cattle-breeding is from the sale of oxen and old cows to the butcher. The quantity of meat consumed in the country is very considerable, as fewer vegetables are eaten than in Europe, and fish, except on the coast — are rare. Every labourer is accustomed to eat meat daily, and he can do it, as it is the cheapest food.

The ranchero usually slaughters his fat cattle himself, and makes *sesina* or *tasajo* of it. He cuts all the flesh, namely, into strips about four fingers in breadth, half an inch thick, and several feet in length. It is then well strewed with fine salt, and with the juice of some dozen of lemons; the whole mass being wrapped up over night in the hide. The next day, as soon as the sun is high enough, the strips are hung up on lines, and thoroughly dried by the air and sun. The process is finished in some days; it is then packed in bales, and sent to market. Vast quantities of this dried flesh are consumed in the country, for it is savoury, keeps well, and is soon prepared, it being only necessary to lay a piece on the coals and roast it.

The herdsman is a confidential man, and his position much esteemed among the country-people. The chief herdsman, who has to superintend several vaquerias, is termed *Mayoral* or *Caporal*; he must be the proprietor's right hand; he attends to the sale of the cattle, supplies the herdsmen with salt, visits the different *hatos* and controls the herdsmen. He is consulted in all matters relating to the herd, he knows whether certain operations are to be performed during the crescent or decrescent moon, he is the only one who knows how to cure the diseases of the animals, he is an excellent horseman, he selects and breaks in the young horses, he is not only most minutely acquainted with the theory of the saddle, but can also alter those which are faulty, so that they may not press, he shoes the horses extremely well, and speaks about the qualities of a good horse, about the best races of the country and their distinguishing characteristics more learnedly than a professor. It is amusing to hear one of these mayorals speak; for he is the living chronicle of the whole neighbourhood, and is acquainted with the genealogy of the biped and quadruped races from the most remote periods. The reader must imagine a tall, broad-shouldered man, with sinewy arms, bare breast, and sunburnt face, but evidently a white Creole. The grey beard leads us to suppose him about sixty years of age; but the eye is

full of life, and he manages a restless young horse with the same indifference as if he were seated on a block of wood.

"Well Tio *(uncle,* a familiar way of addressing elder persons)" we enquire, "how is the colt?" — "Pretty well, Sir, pretty well; something can be made of him." — "Is it for sale." — "No, Sir, it must remain in our own pasture. My son, Joseph, you know him, Sir, is on the look out (*esta campeando*), and is about throwing the lasso (in other words, to marry), therefore I am breaking in this animal for him, so that he may appear respectably." — "And has he already found what he seeks?" — "Yes, Sir, he is on the track; see, there he comes, neighing like a colt; no doubt he has made a successful throw, etc."

The herdsmen are faithful servants of the house, who accompany and protect their master, when on a journey, who fetch him when he visits his farms, and with whom he advises in business affairs, as with members of the family. When he visits the herdsmen, he is served with the best that the house affords, fresh milk, wild honey and fruits; a kid is soon slaughtered, or if there are many guests, a calf. The best pieces are roasted on little spits at the fire, which burns in the middle of the house, whilst the women crush maize and bake bread. The meal is taken seated on a mat, without knife and fork, the fingers doing duty, the bread being handed round in clean little baskets of palm-leaves. The herdsman and his family do not eat with their master, but respectfully wait upon him.

After the meal, business is spoken of; the number of milch-kine, the fat oxen and the state of the pasture commented upon. The master examines the list of births and deaths, and has the certificates of death handed in, namely a piece of hide with the owner's brand, or a slit ear. The herdsman has a story to relate about every death, how guided by the flight of the vultures, he found the carcase, which had been bitten by a palanca (*trigonocephalus,* a highly poisonous snake), or bore the marks of the sharp teeth of a jaguar. He then describes the chase of the wild beast, praises the speed of his horse and the boldness of the dogs, who wag their tails on hearing themselves named.

The master often remains all night with his vaquero, who then prepares a couch for him of mats covered with deer-skins and soft sheep-skins; the gay sarape, which he wears on festive occasions only, is spread over all, and the chinks of the wooden walls are hung with bullocks' hides, in order that the draught may not inconvenience the honoured guest.

Like the herdsmen in their primitive simplicity, live also many rancheros and farmers, who attend to their own little herd, often mixed up with those of the owner of the soil. They mostly cultivate a small plot of land in a ravine or in the forest, and assist the vaquero, when unoccupied. The number of these rancheros in the country is considerable; but though leading a solitary life, and scattered over a vast extent of country, they have much *esprit de corps,* and suffer no suspicious character

to be amongst them. Should any cattle-stealing occur within their district, they quickly unite to hunt down the thief. This is the case on the east coast at least, and the Indian population are here and there the sole exceptions.

XXIV.

HORSES, SHEEP AND GOATS.

In the shrubless plains of the states of Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Durango, Cohahuila aud Chihuahua the soil is almost everywhere poorly watered. In the rainy season, from June till October, these plains are covered with tall grass, but in December all begins to fade, the pools in the hollows dry up, and in the warmest months, April and May, water is frequently not met with for days, or at most brackish thick mud.

In these deserts the horses and mules are chiefly bred. These haciendas and their estancias are seldom sufficiently furnished with water, and are forced to have recourse to tanks, in which the rain-water is collected, or to bore deep wells.

It is infinitely more difficult to breed horses than horned cattle. The latter are impelled by instinct to seek for watering places, which they find in the deepest ravines, often wandering several leagues a day to a river or lake, and always returning before night to the favorite pasture. The horses, on the contrary, must be driven every day to water, as they would otherwise die of thirst. The mares always keep together in troops of forty or sixty *(atajo)*, being led by a stallion, who often trots round the troop to hurry on those that lag behind, and who fights furiously with any other stallion that may chance to approach. It is a beautiful sight to see the herdsmen driving their atajos to the watering-place (care being taken that each atajo should be of one uniform colour): the herd rush neighing across the plain, the foals running briskly by the side of their dams, who carefully observe every motion of their offspring, in order to preserve them from harm. Near the well is the enclosure into which the animals are driven, when any work is to be undertaken with them. Wounds are there healed, the sick attended to, the inside of the ear freed from hair, the tails of the mares docked, etc.

Stallions are never used for riding and driving, and even the mares seldomer than in Europe; the wives of the country-people usually ride mares only. The Mexican horses are not very large, but much resemble those of Arabia in their build. The head is small, the nose slightly curved, the nostrils wide and delicate; large veins are exhibited on the head, the eye is bright, and the small ear very flexible. Although the legs are slight, the bones are strong enough. The hoof is small and hard, and is rarely shod; the black hoof is preferred.

Where horses are met with to such an extent, different breeds are naturally raised, which, however, may all be traced back to Andalusian and Barbary ancestors. The Mexican horse is hardy and requires little attention. It is saddled early in the morning, after having been watered, and makes a long day's journey without baiting, without resting, often in the steepest mountains or through scorching plains. On the saddle being removed in the evening, it is set at liberty for a moment, that it may roll in the sand, is then watered again, and the back washed, where the saddle has been; it is then supplied with dry fodder, chopped straw with maize or barley, enough for the whole night. Often it is not so well off, but after the day's journey is fastened to a long cord, to feed upon grass, or allowed to move about with the forefeet tied together. Curry and brush are known in the city only; the countryman rubs down his horse with a handful of maguey-fibres, or bathes it twice a week. The Mexican horse is not false; it is strictly speaking a domestic animal that knows its master, runs up to him in the field, lets itself be patted, and licks the salt offered to it from the hand. A horse that bites or kicks is a rarity. The horses are on friendly terms with the children, who creep under, and share their bread with them.

The mule is of a very different nature; it has no attachment to its master, has no feeling of honour, kicks and bites, is whimsical and obstinate, and needs both whip and spur. And yet it is an exceedingly useful animal for the country, conveying its burthen safely along the most dangerous mountain-passes, and in the plain content with little nourishment. Nearly all merchandize is conveyed by mules; on good roads one animal will carry four hundredweight, in the mountains three, and it is wonderful, how long they endure despite their heavy daily labour.

Mules are bred on the northern plateaux, and require more attention than horses. Good stallions are dear, and are often paid for at the rate of 500 dollars a head. A mule, however, is worth three times as much as a horse. Four year fillies are bought up from the pasture at from eight to ten dollars each; mules from 25 to 30 dollars. The large estates have often from 8000 to 10,000 horses and mules, and usually effect their sales in winter, in the larger towns.

The herdsmen of these troops are the boldest horsemen in existence. They lead a poor life, as their salary rarely exceeds five dollars a month, and a small measure of maize; they live in wretched huts, their feet bare, and seldom do they behold a village, or enjoy the pleasure of society. Still they would not change with any other mode of life. Half their time is passed in the saddle, and their delight is

to race with the other herdsmen, to cast the lasso, and to mount the untamed horses and mules. Their presumption has no limits; no fall, no wound deters them, and emulation moves them to attempt everything, however dangerous it may be. It is an everyday joke with them, when they have driven some hundred unbroken horses into the enclosure, to single out one which is to be mounted. He who undertakes it seats himself on the gate-post, has the herd driven out, and leaps like a tiger-cat on to the wild horse, without saddle or bridle. The venturesome rider holds fast by the mane, and away they fly across the plain, through thorn bushes, under prickly trees whose branches wound his back; but he does not fall; with one hand he unfastens his belt, and flings it round the horse's nose, so as to be able to turn it; and thus he brings back the foaming, steaming animal to the enclosure.

From his earliest youth, the Mexican is accustomed to being in the saddle. The infant is taken on horseback to church to be christened, the mother gives the child its nourishment on horseback, and the father places the little boy before him in the saddle. When three or four years old, he must sit behind his father, and hold fast by his belt. At eight years of age, the boy manages his horse alone, whilst the women and girls are firm and bold in the saddle, although they have not much to hold by. The Mexican women sit on the right side of the horse, and it is a piece of gallantry on the part of the young ranchero, to jump up behind the saddle without stirrups, to put on the fair one's hat, and to hold the bridle. The following anecdote, related me by an old servant, will show how well the daughters of the herdsmen ride:

"In my youth, I often came on my long journeys as arriero — I was then the cargardor of an atajo — to an estancia of the state of Durango. The caporal (chief herdsman) was a friend of mine; but I was principally attracted to the house by his two daughters, as fresh as roses and as sprightly as colts. I was particularly struck by Josephita the younger one, my heart panted for her, and I had determined to ask her in marriage. The old man may have remarked my intentions, and was always glad to see me, as I invariably brought with me a good draught of catalan (Spanish brandy from grapes) and genuine Orizava cigars from the south; aud being a good-looking youth, ready to spend my money, the girl was not ill-inclined towards me; indeed I have reason to believe she would not have said no, if the important question had been put. Once I happened to be there, and was gradually mustering courage; the old man would not let me go, and I was willing to be detained, although my people were in advance. My future papa promised to lend me one of his excellent horses, with which I could easily overtake my atajo next day. If one is in love, Sir, there is no need to ask twice. On the morning of my departure, a noble horse was brought me, whose restless eye announced that he would fly with me like a falcon. The whole family accompany me to the door, I take leave promising soon to come again, and with a languishing look towards my charmer, approach the steed, in order as a practised rider to vault into the saddle. But the moment I seized the bridle, the Satan began to rear, snorting like a tiger, and rendered it impossible for me to put my foot in the stirrup. My fair one then stepped forward,

saying: 'How, Don Manuel, you cannot ride this tame horse?' As she spoke she laid her hand on the bridle, vaulted into the saddle like a shot, gave the vicious beast a cut with the whip, galloped gracefully round the party, and riding up to me said jeeringly: 'You will surely be able to manage it now.' And so I was, but I was overwhelmed with shame, and felt so much respect for the horsewoman, that I never again entered the house."

In most of the larger farms where horses are bred, sheep-breeding is considered necessary. Several thousand sheep are kept, the profit from which generally covers the expenses of the estate, so that the sale of the mules and horses may be regarded as clear gain. Sheep-breeding is carried on in most districts, less for the wool, than for the tallow and flesh. The race is bad, and the wool inferior, although the extensive dry pastures, the mountain ridges covered with aromatic herbs, and the equable climate would be in the highest degree favourable to an improved breed. From egotism and petty jealousy the Spaniards never introduced the Merino breed to the colonies. Just as they prohibited the culture of the vine, of olives and mulberries in Mexico, in order to retain for the mother country the trade in wine, oil and silk, so were they determined to keep the trade in fine cloth in their own hands, without reflecting that the traffic in fine wool would have brought them in a far more considerable profit.

Only lately some enterprising Mexicans have procured at great expence a few superior ewes and rams from Saxony and the Pyrenees, by which, they have already, attained a finer mixed breed on their estates.

The shepherds go modestly on foot, or have an ass, which besides his Arcadian carries a pot, some salt and a skin with water. The chief property of the shepherd is a good piece of tinder, and a large calabash filled with water. For days he comes to no source, for weeks he has no shelter. In the arid plains, beneath the cloudless sky, the sun scorches by day, and at night a cold wind blows on the plateaux, which for the most part are situated at a greater elevation than the hospital of St. Gotthard. The shepherd always bivouacs beneath the stars, which he knows and observes like the ancient Chaldean; he encamps for the night behind a rock, in a cave, or beneath a gigantic cactus, and shelters himself from hail and rain during the wet season with his blanket only, and with a thickly woven mat, which replaces the tent. His shaggy dogs are his faithful companions, who at night warn him of the approach of wolves and cayotes (jackals), and by day collect the flock. The shepherd's principal weapon is the sling, in managing which he exhibits great skill. Frequently he uses it against the eagle, who is fond of fat lambs, and is driven off by the whizzing stones. When an eagle circles about the flock, the sheep huddle together, but the cunning bird soars so near the outer edge of the flock, that he generally drives a shier animal from the ranks, and destroys it. He does not carry off his prey, but tears it to pieces on the ground, and devours so much of it, that he can hardly move. The shepherd quietly waits for this favorable moment, creeps up, with the lasso in his hand, and catches the eagle, who vainly endeavours to soar into the air. Sometimes he has to do with the bear, who tired of vegetables,

has a fancy for mutton. He casts the lasso about his neck, on which Bruin rises on his hind legs, and seizes the cord with both paws. Always keeping the lasso tight, the shepherd approaches, strikes him with his heavy hunting-knife on the head, so that he is stunned, and presently despatched.

Towards the end of the rainy season the flocks are collected, the fat wethers and old ewes are selected and slaughtered. In a building set apart for the purpose, there is a range of large coppers, in which all the flesh is stewed down. The firm tallow, in masses of about two hundredweight, is packed in sheepskins, and forwarded to the cities, and especially to the mining districts, as tallow alone is burnt in the mines.

The slaughtering period (*matanza*) lasts usually a month, and is a holiday for the shepherds, fully recompensing them for what they must endure the rest of the year. They have, namely, to perform the slaughtering, skinning and cutting up, and receive as extra wages the head and the intestines of the victim. Of the intestines they manufacture bad gut-strings, of which immense quantities are used throughout the country; and fatten themselves and their families for a long time with sheep's heads and livers.

The cooked meat, from which the fat has been extracted (*carne de chito*), lies there in complete mountains after a matanza: it is bought up by the dealers and conveyed to the villages, where the Indians buy it at the market for a mere trifle; they seasoned with Spanish pepper, regard it as a delicacy.

Goats are reared in a similar manner, and are considered very lucrative. The goat is much hardier than the sheep, suffering little from change of climate and humidity. The steep, barren mountains, volcanic soils or limestone hills covered with thorns and creeping plants, constitute the paradise of the goats. In the summer they clamber up to the highest points of the Cordilleras, but in winter they are tended on the plains and on the spurs of the mountains.

During the summer the milk is used for preparing cheese; the small round goats' cheeses are sold throughout the country. As with the sheep, the chief profit is the tallow. Towards autumn, when the animals are fattest, the annual slaughtering takes place. A fat he-goat is calculated to yield twelve, a she-goat from eight to ten pounds of tallow, which is disposed of to the soap-boilers and candle-makers. The skins are for the most part sent to Europe.

The goat-herd is the poorest of all the herdsmen (mostly an Indian), but a great rogue, who cheats his master of many a kid. He feeds on the fruit of the cactus and all sorts of roots, but takes care always to be supplied with dried meat, and not to let his horn be quite emptied of pinole (the flour of roasted maize mixed with sugar). Sometimes he is seen to weave baskets and mats of palm-leaves, sometimes to carve wood.

We must also devote a few words to the swine, which are met with in great numbers. Moses and Mahomet forbade pork from wise considerations of health, and in the warm regions of Mexico a similar prohibition would not be unwise. The fat, soft flesh weakens the organs of digestion, already enfeebled by the climate, and

increases the disposition for fever and skin-diseases. The villager as well as the ranchero alwayskeeps pigs about his house, which are seldom stied, but are allowed perfect freedom. They know their house, and never lose themselves, although they make long excursions in search of water and food. As long as they are not full-grown, they get merely the leavings of the kitchen, in order to accustom themselves to the house, and sleep in the open air, near their master's cottage. When older, they have a small sty, constructed with logs, and are fattened with maize. Both the European and the Polynesian race are bred; the latter is small, short-legged, with curly bristles; but becomes exceedingly fat.

The Mexican breeds swine chiefly for the sake of the fat. The bakers use considerable quantities, and soap is mostly manufactured from it. An immense quantity of soap is used in the country, partly because the linen is always washed in cold water, partly because the people bathe much, and invariably employ soap.

Swine are bred on an extensive scale in the districts where there is abundance of agricultural produce. Estates which grow vast quantities of maize, barley, horse-beans and pease, without having a market at hand for the produce, turn much of it to good account by fattening. In Guadalajara and Mechoacan, in the valley of Toluca and in the plains of Perote, many estates fatten a thousand swine annually and sell them in troops to the soap-boilers and ham-salters. The Mexican hams are far from resembling those of Westphalia; they are very fat, and are used in the kitchen chiefly for eking out the olla podrida and other dishes.

Where swine are bred on a large scale, the herds are driven every day to some marshy locality, and brought back in the evening to the enclosures, when a small quantity of dry food is spread before them. The full-grown porkers are removed to separate pens, where they are plentifully fed with pulse and barley; they are often driven out into the plain for a short time, more for the sake of exercise than to seek for nourishment. Here they soon grow fat, and are subsequently promoted to another pen, where the fattening is completed.

XXV.

MINING AND MINERS.

When at the beginning of the 16th century the Spaniards landed in Mexico, they first met with the natives in the valley of Sempoallan, not far from the sea. They were agricultural Totonacs, ,subject to the Aztecs; the chiefs wore gold and silver ornaments, which attracted the rapacious glances of the white adventurers.

Their first questions were; "Whence comes this?" The natives pointed to the west. When soon after, the ambassadors of Montezuma brought rich presents of the precious metals, adorned with emeralds, in order to induce the unbidden guests to turn back, they were confirmed in their opinion, that there were literally golden mountains in the interior, and the cry was: "Forwards!" When after great exertions, they had at lenght crossed the mountains, they perceived a city on the outskirts of the table-land, glancing in the sunshine, and fancied they recognized silver-walls and golden roofs. Though they soon found out their error, they still believed that what they sought was to be met with further in the interior.

After infinite toil and dangers the mighty empire of Tenochtitlan was subdued, the conquerors had obtained immense booty, but were still not satisfied. The report of treasure attracted thousands of Spaniards, whose first and last idea was, to seek for gold mines. Thus in the first decennium after the conquest of Mexico gold and silver mines were worked, and rich veins were discovered in all directions.

The Aztecs knew the art of smelting, perhaps also of amalgamation, but being unacquainted with the use of iron, their mining remained imperfect. According to the traditions of the Aztecs, the Toltecs understood the art of working metals at a very early period, and had learnt it from their divine hero Quezalcoatl.

The conquering Aztecs improved their inheritance, and acquired considerable skill. Cortes, in his report to the Emperor Charles V., describes the city of Mexico, and the market-place, as he found it on his first visit before the place had been taken. "Here", says he, "are all kinds of goods, which are found in the provinces, namely provisions and vegetables, as well as ornaments of gold, silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, stone, bone, mother-of-pearl, shells and feathers. They sell also hewn and unhewn stones, tiles, bricks, etc." They constructed looking-glasses of finely polished gold, pyrites and obsidian, arms, ornaments of all kinds, vases, etc. Among the presents which Cortes received from Montezuma, and sent to his sovereign, was a fish, which Charles V. forwarded to the Pope. Benvenuto Cellini saw it, and calls it a great work of art, as the body, made of silver, and the scales of gold were cast in one mould, which appeared to him inexplicable. Amalgamation was then not known in Europe, but it appears the Aztecs were acquainted with it. Although the ancient Indians understood working metals, their mining was evidently in its infancy; but in a country, endowed by nature with inexhaustible treasures, it was natural that rich veins of ore should be found on the surface, that whole masses of pure metal should be detected by their brightness. We know from the history of the country, that the Aztec kings imposed a heavy tribute of gold-dust, and grains of gold on the subjugated tribes, wherever the country brought forth these treasures. Even now pure silver is found in large masses, in veins as well as in layers, of which there are still innumerable in the uninhabited mountains.

Copper is not less plentiful, and is also met with in great purity in the important layers of Chihuahua. The ancient Aztecs understood the smelting of copper: their

very simple mode of smelting without furnaces may still be seen in the mines of Santa Clara, in the state of Mechoacan.

Where the aborigines got their silver from, and how they smelted it, is not known with certainty; it is, however, affirmed, that Tasco (situated 30 leagues to the south-west of the capital) and Pachuca on the table-land, 24 leagues to the north) are the oldest mines. It is certain that the Spaniards began their mining operations here at a very early period. In the first half of the sixteenth century many mines had been opened, and Charles V. issued various edicts, in which he recommends carrying on the operations regularly in the same manner as in Germany, and with the tools there in use, also to pay the tithe due to the crown.

Wherever there appeared a certainty of a good return, a village or a town, arose, however rude and inhospitable the district might be. As in the cold dreary deserts of Pasco in Upper Peru, at an elevation of more than 3000 feet, the rich yield of silver ore suddenly called forth a populous city, so in Mexico, certainly under less unfavorable circumstances, the cities of Guanajuato and Zacatecas, Durango, San Louis Potosi, Fresnillo, Tlalpujahua and many others were founded.

After the fall of the Aztec empire, the conquest of the country proceeded with wonderful rapidity, chiefly because the invaders hoped to meet with new and greater treasures in every mountain they beheld. The manner in which the Indians were forced to labour in the mines is well known, and how, accustomed hitherto to the gentler pursuits of agriculture, their numbers rapidly diminished. By degrees laws were framed for their protection, and for better regulating all mining operations. The prosperity of numerous districts is exclusively owing to this branch of industry.

Mexico has immense tracts of the most fertile soil, and exports scarcely any produce. Wine, oil, wax and other agricultural products, which the country might produce in abundance, are imported. The unjust policy of Spain towards its colonies laid the foundation of this evil; and since they have been independent, civil commotions have hindered the development of all native industry. Mining alone progressed, so that the present annual produce of from 32 to 34 million dollars annually, is higher than at the best period of the Spanish government, when it never exceeded 27 millions.

In the year 1810 the struggle for independence commenced, owing to which mining, and every other branch of industry suffered immensely. The produce declined to one fifth and even one sixth of what it had been; in the most important works the water was suffered to obtain the upper hand, and the miners proceeded in their search for ore in the most reckless manner. It was not till the year 1823 that a new epoch in Mexican mining commenced. European companies resumed operations, furnished with large capitals, associations of the natives emulated their endeavours, the government issued fresh decrees, and at length the produce equalled and even surpassed that of former times.

In no country in the world are similar elements for mining united, as in Mexico. Not only are the precious metals met with; but also copper, lead, zinc, tin, quicksilver and iron. The layers of the last metal are numerous and productive, but

as yet little has been done in this particular branch. Foreign iron is almost exclusively used, in a country which might supply other lands with iron and steel. Capital and labour have hitherto been devoted to acquiring silver and gold, and for this end the grandest works are erected. Guanajuato, now a city of more than 80,000 inhabitants owes its origin to mining. The mines of Valenciana, Rayas, Marfil etc., build mighty levels, the mining-buildings are palaces, massively built of stone in the midst of a city of workmen's houses, the shafts are sunk in the most luxurious manner, partly faced with hewn stone, and carried to a considerable depth. Thus, for example, the magnificent shaft of Royas is octangular, 40 feet in diameter, and about 1200 feet deep.

In Valenciana, a mine which for many years has yielded its owners an annual profit of a million piastres, the shafts and adits cost several millions, a lofty and broad spiral path is cut through firm rock to a depth of 500 feet, so that troops of mules can descend into the bowels of the earth, and convey the ore to the surface. In its best days it yielded annually 700,000 cwt. of ore. Upwards of 3000 persons were occupied by it; about 160,000 pounds of powder were used, and the annual outlay amounted to a million of piastres. There were, and are still, many such mines in operation.

Similar arrangements are seen in Zacatecas, a mining-town of 35,000 inhabitants, older than Guanajuato, and for some centuries the source of great treasure. Situated in a rude district, void of vegetation (about 7978 English feet above the sea), it owes its origin and prosperity to its mineral wealth. The mines here are among the most important in the country, their outworks appear like immense castles reared against the face of the barren rock, and long strings of mules, proceeding to the smelting-houses, enliven the dreary landscape. Fresnillo, Plateros, Catorce, Sombrerete, Real del Monte, and many other districts have works on a large scale, but the greatest are incontestibly those of Guanajuato and Zacatecas.

The works of Sauceda and Fresnillo in Zacatecas, as well as some in Guanajuato, seen from the heights, appear like small towns, and present an animated appearance with their numerous horses and mules, which, in the absence of water-power are used for setting the machines in motion and for triturating the ore. Not all kinds of ore are adapted for smelting, but much is subjected to a chemical process termed amalgamation. A Spaniard, named Bartholomew Medina, made this important discovery in the Mexican mining-town of Pachuca, in the year 1557. A few years later his process was employed on an extensive scale all over Mexico, and in 1571 was also introduced into Peru. The ore having been crushed into a fine powder is mixed with a strong solution of common salt, to which sulphuretted oxide of copper (vitriol) is added; it is then carefully kneaded by horses or men, and finally quicksilver is worked up into the mass. The silver amalgamates with the mercury, the strange particles are then carried off by water, and at length the quicksilver is separated from the silver by distillation. When in the year 1786 Born and Gellert at Freiberg discovered amalgamation, it was without the least acquaintance with the Mexican invention; the chemical process, too, is quite different, and it is only to be

wondered at how a process that had been carried on, on a large scale, for upwards of two centuries, could have remained unknown in Europe.

At the works of Zacatecas alone, about 40,000 cwt. of ore are amalgamated weekly, 24,000 of which in the foundry of Sauceda. The great works of Fresnillo, six leagues from Zacatecas, have eight crushing-mills, and 320 ore-mills (*arrastras*) in operation; 60,000 cwt. of ore are usually subjected to the amalgamating process at once, which lasts four weeks, so that every week 15,000 to 18,000 cwt. are brought here from the mines, and the same quantity washed. Humboldt at the beginning of the century estimated the quantity of ore amalgamated in the country at 2,000,000 cwt., and this amount has doubtless increased. Compare this with Freiberg in Germany, where annually from 50,000 to 60,000 cwt. are amalgamated, consequently only a twelfth part of what is done in Fresnillo alone.

These immense foundries occupy naturally many of the people, and thousands of beasts of draught and burden, because all the machines, owing to the want of running water, must be set in motion by horses and mules. Our remarks are to be referred chiefly to Zacatecas and its neighbourhood; for other districts, although not all, have water-power.

The quicksilver required for the amalgamation, about 20,000 cwt. annually, was formerly supplied by the Spanish government, at a fixed price. After the defection of the colonies, the traffic was managed by England, and although the prices rose from 70 to 90 and 100 dollars per cwt., this important article was not wanting. Some twelve or fifteen years ago the house of Rothschild in London monopolized the trade with quicksilver by buying up the produce of Almada in Spain, and raising the price at pleasure. The consequence was, that the smelting process was resorted to, wherever it was possible. Owing to the discovery of rich quicksilver mines in California, the prices have again fallen (from 120 and 130 dollars to 45 and 50), a circumstance of no mean importance for Mexican mining.

Salt is obtained in the country itself. The salines of Pennon Blanco, between Zacatecas and San Luis are of a peculiar nature: there is, namely, a shallow cavity in the plain, which during the rainy season becomes filled with water, forming a lake. The whole neighbourhood is saline; the earthy particles carried by the water into the lake are impregnated with salt, and as in the dry season all the water evaporates, the loose earth, containing 25 per cent of salt, remains. Of this earth, a fourth of the weight of the ore is added for the amalgamation, consequently for 100 cwt. of ore 25 cwt. of saline earth; the district of Zacatecas alone requires annually 520,000 cwt. of this material, and Guanajuato about the same quantity. In other districts sea-salt is used, or the produce of the salines.

In general nearly the same rules are observed in working the mines as in Europe; as much care as possible is taken to preserve the lives of the miners, by ventilation, by proper supports etc. The manner in which the labour is performed in the mines is somewhat different from that of Europe. The miners labour mostly in pairs, one holding the borer, the other the hammer, but occasionally changing tools with each other. In many districts the miners have a share of the profit.

Saturday is always a very busy day, the mines then become markets, the owners of foundries and speculators buy up the ore, large sums change hands, and the miners spend part of their earnings in the booths and liquor-shops. In Guanajuato it is customary in all the mines for the labourers to receive a third part of the refined ore *(pepena)*. The proprietors of mines have rarely their own foundries but sell the ore on the spot. In Zacatecas the miners have seldom a share in the profit.

We have already alluded to the great weight of ore dragged by the Indians to the surface. Frequently they have to ascend a thousand or fifteen hundred feet, not by ladders, but by means of trunks of trees in which steps have been hewn. As tallow candles only are used in the mines, the workman must shelter his light with one hand, so that the draught may not extinguish it, and has therefore only a slight hold with the other. He thus moves upward with his burthen, the trunks being slightly inclined, and secured by props every fifteen feet, the abyss on either side, into which a false step precipitates him. Indians have been known to carry up five hundredweight in this manner, in their leathern sacks.

The mine-pits are frequently spacious and furnished with gates, under the care of porters. The miners on leaving are carefully examined by the porters, so that no rich ore may be stolen. The desire of the Mexican miners to carry away ore is invincible; the most honest of them, who might be trusted with any sum of money, cannot resist picking up a piece of pure silver, if he feels sure of carrying it off in safety. All kinds of tricks and manœuvres are practised, in order to deceive the searchers. They crush the ore to powder, mix it with tallow, and rub it as pomatum into their bushy hair, they hollow the handle of their hammers, in order to fill them, they conceal grains of gold or silver in their mouth, ear, or any other orifice. To pass the searchers with booty is regarded as a triumph of industry, and the *esprit de corps* admires the deed. Their inventive powers are never at rest. Once, for instance, a dog had got into the mine. The overseer was dissatisfied, and the owner of the animal, to get over the difficulty, killed the dog with a blow of his hammer, and threw it aside. After some days there was a fearful stench in the mine, and on the overseer enquiring into the cause, several of the workmen told him it proceeded from the dead dog, and that the man who had killed it, must remove it. With apparent reluctance this was done, the carrion was dragged out and flung on to the rubbish heap. But the whole of the dead animal was filled with rich ore; the trick having been deliberately planned. In another mine the men went still further. The overseer had fallen down the shaft and broken his neck. The corpse was raised by means of a gin, but at the way-board it was remarked to be unusually heavy, and on being examined was found to be laden with rich ore, even the abdomen being filled with it. The miners did not deny it, and observed, that they had intended to comfort the poor widow with it.

In many mines the workmen enter quite naked, rendering it apparently impossible to conceal the ore, and yet it daily happens that some is carried off and placed in security.

It is interesting to visit a mine at daybreak. The night task issue forth, brown fellows, partly of athletic make, the upper part of the body naked. The tools are handed over to the smiths, the ore brought up, the overseers report to their superiors, the inspector (*rayador*) registers the work done. Meanwhile the gang assemble for the day-task, and arrange themselves in pairs; their names are entered, the work to be undertaken intimated, tools, candles, powder are distributed, and now the procession begins. They are conducted by an overseer (or by several), who crosses himself before the crucifix, or the image of the patron saint at the entrance. The whole gang imitate the example, and the overseer sings a strophe of the Ave Maria, which is repeated in chorus. The descent commences with the hymn; the tones are soon heard feebly ascending from the pit, and should the procession be somewhat long, the song of those who first entered is lost in the distance before all the singers have commenced their descent. There is a landing-place in every mine, where the workmen have erected a stone altar, on which the image of the patron-saint is erected. Lighted tapers are placed before it, and every morning fresh flowers and foliage are brought, with which the altar is decorated. From this point the miners disperse in all directions, and begin their labours.

At the foundries the task is also usually begun with an Ave, but the workmen who have to perform their labours by daylight, or at least on the surface of the earth, have no peculiarities worthy of note. Where the smelting-process is in vogue, more skill is required. The smelters rank somewhat higher, whilst at the amalgamation-works nearly all the workmen are ordinary day-labourers. Even at the foundries the people must be carefully observed; and all who go out are searched.

The silver is cast into bars of a certain form, weighing from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and fifty marks (60 to 75 pounds). It is thus conveyed to the mints. Mexico, Guanajuato, Guadalajaro and Zacatecas have mints. The bars are assayed, and reduced to coinage. The government retains for this operation 3 per cent, the mint a quarter dollar in the mark, the eighth of a dollar for the board of superintendence. The owner of the silver receives the value in new piastres. Bars are occasionally exported; but only after paying the dues.

The miners have their own peculiarities, and form a distinct class of the population. In the mining-districts little or nothing is done in the way of agriculture, the miner knows nothing else and desires nothing else than his mines, he regards all other occupations with contempt, and rarely takes to any other, although he has to pass his life in the depths of the earth, deprived of every ray of sunshine.

Almost every inhabitant of a mining-town tries his fortune in the mines. The daily accounts of the miners about rich ores, the bars of silver which are carried through the streets, the true or exaggerated tales of the thousands which this or that fellow citizen has earned in a short time, have an electric effect on the imagination of a people already exciteable, who calculate the value of money in proportion to the enjoyments it can command. There are people who occupy themselves exclusively in seeking new veins. They are called *cateodores*, openers or ore-seekers; usually they are old workmen, who have an objection to exerting themselves.

Furnished with his tools, some candles and powder, the old gnome issues forth, clambers about the precipices and ravines, hammers here and there, and if he discovers a vein, knocks off a little of the ore. With this he endeavours to do business with novices in mining. "Sir, I have discovered a mine, not that I want to cry it up, but there is no ore equal to it in the place, what noble *pinta* (silver ore). There must be an overwhelming mass of it. Just the same as the *veta madre*." The Mexican miners call the chief mine of a district, the mother-mine, and ignorant people believe that it runs through the whole country. I have often heard it said: "That is certainly the mine of Guanajuato", even when it was a hundred leagues distant. "When the ore-seeker has praised all the good qualities of his mine, he takes out a piece of ore, blows on it, in order to freshen it up, and lets it sparkle in the light. "How beautifull", he exclaims, "nothing but red silver ore, and that quite on the surface, where all is decomposed. How must it be when one gets deeper! The thing is done with a trifle, with a few hundred dollars a fortune may be made, for so rich a mine as this is not easily to be met with!" The bait takes. The honest tradesman had quite made up his mind to have nothing to do with mines, but to stick to his shop, or at the utmost to buy silver at a profit of 12 per cent; but as other curious people enter the shop, praise the ore, and ask all sorts of questions, he gradually fancies that he has stumbled upon a prize, and would be an ass not to benefit by it. He therefore winks at the cateador to make him understand that he is not to reveal too much, who, in his turn, casts a longing side-glance at the brandy-bottle, which is at once understood. He is treated to a full glass of the best, and it is soon arranged that a sample of at least 25 pounds of ore is to be fetched from the new layer, which is to be proved by the shopkeeper's friend, the master *Azoquero* (amalgamator), the first metallurgic authority. Eventually there is some talk as to the proprietorship of the mine; the finder, of course, reserves a share for himself, and the situation of chief overseer, and the business is in good train.

Of ten cases of the kind, scarcely one is successful; the prudent merchant is security for a few hundred dollars, and this not sufficing, he withdraws from the affair. Others continue the speculation, often with the best result. The professional miner (*minero*) never loses hope; mining is with him a passion like play, no loss frightens him, he devotes his last farthing to the mine, even though uncertain whether he can pay for his breakfast, and is convinced that fortune will befriend him in the course of the day.

We have known many such examples, and have wondered at the infinite confidence of the speculators. We knew one, who might be regarded as a model, sometimes rich, sometimes poor, always an inveterate miner. Sometimes he was seen on foot, poorly clad, on the way to his mine, carrying with him a few candles and a little bag of powder. Sometimes in superfine clothes, on a noble steed, followed by his servant; sometimes his house was well furnished, and at another time it contained little save a deal table and a bench of the same material. Once even he had sold his bed, and like Margery Daw, slept upon straw: he had nothing more to dispose of, and had no credit. He wanted powder, however, and

was firmly convinced that this particular day would be a lucky one. He therefore carried off his old mother's bed and sold it. The good old woman was inconsolable, when she missed her couch in the evening; but the son quieted her with the assurance, that she should have a better one the ensuing day. The next morning he hastened to his mine, to see whether ore had been discovered by the night-task, and was received by the workmen with hearty cheers: they had been eminently successful, and he was able to keep faith with his mother. After innumerable ups and downs, he at length conquered fortune, and although unable to enjoy it long himself, left his children amply provided for.

Whoever has lived in these mining districts, must have had frequent opportunities of seeing remarkable changes of fortune, and the history of Mexican mining offers innumerable examples. We knew a simple smelter, who with his sons worked a small mine, in hopes, by the sale of the ore, to have his day's labour paid for. Fortune smiled upon him, the mine turned out very productive, and in ten years, the poor labourer had an annual income of more than a hundred thousand dollars. It not unfrequently happens, however, that enormous wealth is thrown away as rapidly as it is acquired. The Mexicans bear misfortune better than good fortune. Most of them, when in possession of a large sum, do not invest it well, but thoughtlessly waste it, relying upon their luck: indeed, it is not a rare occurrence, that the same persons, who bet thousands upon a fighting-cock or a card, have some years later to struggle with extreme indigence. They console themselves with having already enjoyed, and with having gained experience, which they forget as soon as fortune smiles on them again.

In the mining-town of Tasco, a man named Patino had a small foundry, where strange ores were crushed on the usual terms. He was considered a good amalgamator, who could manage to live, but nothing beyond that. An Indian, who occasionally supplied him with coals, once brought him a little bag of ore, which he had found in the forest, near his coal-pits, and begged him to assay it. Patino promised compliance; but whenever the Indian, Miguel José, enquired about it, he invariably found the specimens lying in the same corner. At length Patino was induced to assay the ore, and found to his surprise, that it was of the best quality. When the coal-merchant came again, he was told that the ores were not bad, and that if he would bring more of it, it should be crushed, and the profit divided. Miguel was content, took some tools with him, and promised soon to bring more. The next day he announced that he had enough to load twelve mules; the mine was now hired by the two, and yielded in a few years a profit of three million dollars. How did they employ their wealth? Patino became a passionate gamester and spendthrift. Without reflecting that his luck might change, without putting by a penny, he scattered his money profusely; but when the mine became worse, when an advance was called for, he made debts, gradually lost everything, was glad in his declining years to accept a paltry situation as amalgamator, and died so poor, that the workmen were obliged to bury him by subscription. — The Indian José also lived in a ridiculously extravagant manner; he caused his horses to be shod with silver, built

magnificent houses, furnished them splendidly, rioted and wasted: but at the same time made some provision for the future. He opened a retail business, with a fine stock in trade, put by sufficient capital to carry it on with, and when the mine was exhausted, had enough left to live quite at his ease.

Similar stories are connected with the names of La Borde, Obregon, Romero, Fagoaga, Flores and many others, names formerly borne by the nobles, during the Spanish rule. Nearly all have become poor, after having been the wealthiest men in the world, their palaces are in ruins, or have passed into strange hands. In the friendly little town of Cuernavaca is the house dwelt in by Joseph de la Borde during his latter years; the large garden with its stiff arches and fountains, shews that it was laid out at a most tasteless period, but at an immense expence. Now all is neglected and in ruins, and close by is a church, the walls of which are unfinished. Perhaps the walls will be built up by a miracle. Joseph de la Borde had left house, garden and capital to the town, with the obligation to complete the church which he had begun; but the capital is gone, house and garden bring in nothing, and fall to ruin like the church. La Borde was one of the most fortunate miners that ever existed; at several periods of his life, and in different places, he discovered immense wealth in mines, and invariably became poor again. When in funds, he built fine churches, like that at Tasco, founded hospitals, made donations to the clergy, and often had to begin over again. In old age he was once more favored by fortune at Sombvereta; he desired to leave his wealth to his son, and therefore induced his only daughter to take the veil. The son, however, turned monk, and the child of fortune ended his days in melancholy solitude.

Once, too, we saw the owner of the mine of Valenciana in Guanajuato, who was long one of the richest men in the country, now a poor unhappy, blind old man. These are the chances to which the *minero* is subjected.

The miners are thoughtless from their earliest youth. They risk their lives as often as they go down, but they see the danger no longer, having been accustomed to it from boyhood. Their fortunes rise and fall with those of the mine; if this yields well, the miner earns immensely, especially where his wages consist in a share of the ore. It is nothing uncommon for a single workman to earn some hundred piastres in the week, and, when the mines of Catorce in the state of San Luis Potosi were most productive, many of the miners are said to have earned even as much as a thousand dollars a week. Though these may be considered as exceptions only, the miner's wages are higher than those of other labourers. But to find a man amongst the miners in good circumstances, or one who puts by some of his earnings every week, in order to make sure of a small capital, is as difficult as for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The money burns a hole in the miner's pocket; during the whole week he has not seen the sunlight, and now, on Sunday, he means to enjoy it thoroughly. He hardly knows what to do with himself for excitement. He buys rockets and lets them off in broad daylight, he drinks, dances, plays, bets at the cock-fight, he buys things of no earthly use; in short so manages as to get rid of every farthing of his earnings before the Sunday is over, and on Monday is

forced to buy bread on trust. It has happened before now, that a miner has betted a thousand dollars on a cock, or that he has spent several hundreds in jewels for his sweetheart. Sometimes they buy clothes of the finest cloth, or treat their comrades to the most expensive wines. A miner once asked the price of some broad gold lace; and on being told by the merchant that it was too dear for him, immediately bought the whole, cut it to pieces with his knife, and flung it into the street.

Unlike the agriculturists, who are for the most part friendly and polite, especially towards their employers, the miners are arrogant and surly. They are always inclined to opposition, always squabble about their wages. Labouring constantly in dark passages, secluded from the world, hardens their characters. Ignorant in the highest degree in everything not pertaining to their craft, they are inclined to superstition and fanaticism. They believe in mountain-sprites, and hear them hammering far down in the bowels of the earth. They have also presentiments, and refuse to admit women into the mine, as the ore would then disappear. The miner provides himself with charms, and returns thanks to this or that saint, for having preserved his neck on this or that occasion. He frequently promises his patron-saint a consecrated taper, which is lighted on the altar in the mine, or in the church.

A good round sum is spent by the miners every year in church-festivals, besides every Saturday, on receiving their pay, half a real (threepence) for masses. When in full work they do not mind this. They are not over particular about the amount of their household expenditure; but the wife must see that the civil-list is provided for, before the man proceeds to the gaming-table.

The miners are in the highest degree jealous, but at the same time not the most faithful husbands. On Sundays, when excited with drink, they frequently quarrel, mostly about the fair sex, and sometimes wind up with the knife. The female sex is sufficiently loose, which is invariably the case where the men are lax in their morals. That the education of the children is much neglected, is a natural consequence; the girls follow in the footsteps of the mothers, and the boys take to the mines, as soon as they are able to deseend the shafts, where they hear little calculated to improve them. In this respect the mining-towns are not all alike; the morality of the people depends on the facility of making money, and consequently on the yield of the mines. The morals suffer most, when the discovery of a rich mine in some desert spot, suddenly, and as if by magic, assembles a population, where a short time before nothing was to be met with but wild beasts. The workmen hurry thither to earn more than they could do at home. At first, light huts are constructed with branches, as a provisional shelter against wind and weather. The miners are followed by the small traders, who supply bread, brandy, tobacco and other requisites at high prices. The ranchero brings a fat bullock or two, and a few sheep ready for the butcher, field-kitchens are arranged under a tall tree, or in a neighbouring cave, smoke rises everywhere, as from an encampment or bivouac. By degrees a few better cottages are built on speculation, a small shop is established, and does a thriving business, for all the miners leave a great part of their earnings there.

A few weeks pass, and on Sundays an animated market is held. Maize, beans

and Spanish pepper are brought thither in masses, fruits of all kinds, according to the season and locality, oranges, apples, pears, peaches, bananas, pine-apples etc. Fruit is a necessary of life for the Mexican, every labourer lays in a stock on Sunday, so that he may have his orange every day, or his *chirimoya*. Meanwhile the first provisional diggings are increased and replaced by more substantial ones, a foundry is erected near the brook, whole strings of mules come and go, laden partly with building-materials, partly with provisions, returning with ore. Rows of small cottages are now ready for the workmen, larger ones start up for the overseers, and in less than two months several hundred families are settled. On Sunday they desire to hoar mass, and as it is well paid for, the nearest priest comes, even though the distance should be twenty or thirty miles. At first divine service is performed in the open air, and at the same time the foundation stone of a little chapel is laid. Should the mine continue to supply rich ore, galleries are soon run in various directions, fresh mines are sought after and opened, so that the population continues to increase. The amount of money in circulation is extraordinary, and although every necessary of life is exceedingly dear, no one objects, as the requisite funds are so easily obtained. The scum of society is soon well represented, professed gamesters, usurers, thieves and fences; necessity calls forth laws, and the choice of a magistrate introduces something like order. Should energetic men obtain the upper hand, who insist on purifying the society, the best foundation for the future welfare of the settlement is laid.

In the course of a year, a rich mine will often assemble a population of several thousand persons. Traffic is the first adjunct of mining, and subsequently when the required workshops for carrying on the enterprise are well established, agriculture begins to be thought of. Every little valley, capable of cultivation, every gentle slope is planted, so that, at least, the most indispensable vegetables may be near at hand. Flocks of goats clamber about the rocks, and oxen are fattened for the shambles in enclosed pastures.

No branch of labour is so well calculated as mining to assemble the various classes of society. Trade and commerce, agriculture and cattle-breeding appear first as ministering agents, in order to furnish the population labouring in the bowels of the earth with the necessaries of life. The miners, however, bring forth the *nervus rerum*, which, like a powerful magnet, attracts and animates. At length come the arts and sciences, bestowing civilisation on the shapeless mass, producing order in the chaos, introducing mind into that which could hitherto be regarded as matter only. Shooting up overnight like a huge fungus, a mining-town affords us an image of the organic life of human society, elsewhere developing itself slowly, but according to the same laws.

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